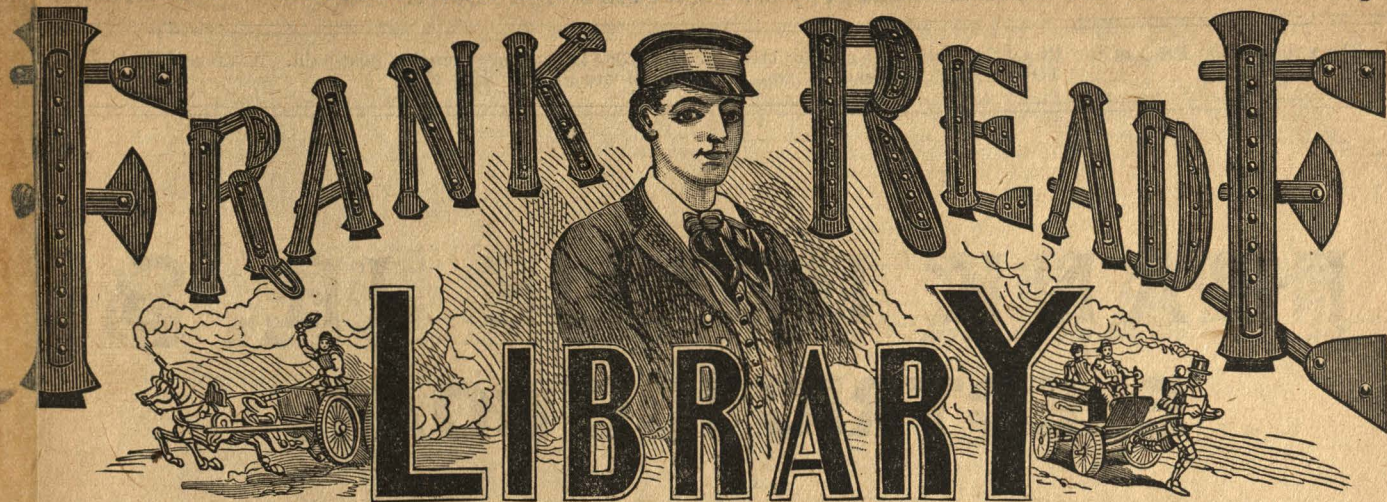


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FRANK READE JR.'S Electric Ice Boat; OR, LOST IN THE LAND OF CRIMSON SNOW. PART I. By "NONAME."



Within a few minutes their pursuers came up, and as Frank did not want them to destroy the boat, he went out to meet them with the others.

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FRANK READE JR.'S ELECTRIC ICE BOAT:

OR,

Lost in the Land of Crimson Snow.

By "NONAME,"

Author of "Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Air Yacht; or, The Great Inventor Among the Aztecs," etc.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

A FEARFUL TRAGEDY.

DUSKY twilight had fallen over the landscape, and a soft June breeze was rustling the foliage of bushes and trees, as the enormous blood-red moon began, presently, to slowly rise behind the hills, far beyond Readestown.

The blue-uniformed station-master at the railroad depot was just in the act of setting his signals for the seven o'clock train from the East, when a man who came from the post office, paused with a letter in his hand, and opened it in the light of a lantern on the platform.

"Good evening, Mr. Reade," politely said the station-master, upon seeing who the dark-clothed gentleman was. "Expect anybody?"

"No one on the train," replied the man. "But I have just received an official letter from France, and as I have no correspondence with any one in Paris, I cannot restrain my curiosity to see what this letter says."

The station-master bowed obsequiously, for he stood in great respect of the curly-headed, dark-mustached gentleman, who was the wealthiest man in the town, the greatest inventor in the world, and a man whose good will was eagerly sought by heads of republics and kingdoms.

"Frank Reade, Jr.," said the letter he was reading: "By the transatlantic steamer which carried this letter, I have dispatched Mr. Hans Jans, a Dutch clerk from this office, with letters of introduction from me, and the request to secure your aid in a matter of vital importance, details of which Jans will give you. I will briefly sketch the facts: Paul St. Malo, the Viscount of Pontivy, was enormously rich, had but one heir, named Simon Grimm, who is an English cousin and sailor, and the viscount was mad on the subject of crossing the North Pole in a balloon. A man named Beauvais, of Brest, professionally an aeronaut, induced St. Malo to have a balloon constructed, and the two went to Spitzberg, where they took to flight, since which nothing has been seen or heard of them or their air ship. Simon Grimm now claims St. Malo's fortune, but I refused it to him, until the full legal expiration of the time of absence allotted by law, occurs. If within six months St. Malo does not appear, or is not heard from, I am, reluctantly, obliged to pay over to Grimm the viscount's fortune. St. Malo detested Grimm, who seems to be a bad man, but as the English sailor is the viscount's only heir, despite all wishes to the contrary, he will inherit. Acting upon the last instructions of the viscount, in event of his absence a certain period of time, I write you to aid in finding some evidence of his life or death. To this end I have told Simon Grimm my intention,

and sent my clerk, Hans Jans, to you to secure your co-operation, with the aid of one of your wonderful flying apparatuses. I know that the task is tremendous, the field of exploration enormous, and the risk fearful; but any reasonable amount of money is at your command, to undertake the work, and to compensate you for your trouble. Please write me your answer."

"JACQUES RENAUD."

The letter was from the prefect of the Parisian police, and was countersigned by the president of the Chamber of Notaries, who is a functionary somewhat similar to the surrogate in this country.

Frank Reade, Jr., was an inventor of marvels, of aerial, mechanical and marine construction; had been in every country of civilization, and had undertaken to accomplish many wonderful performances, but this one seemed to be a most hopeless task.

"Two men leave the remote island of Spitzberg in a balloon, on the other side and at the top notch of the world, dart up in the air, and are carried into an unknown region. Yet Monsieur Renaud calmly expects me to find them!" thought Frank with a grim smile.

"Truly the belief of people in my ability to do marvelous things is very flattering; but Renaud should exercise a little common sense and give me something definite to do. How am I to know whether these two daring balloonists fell in the open polar sea, landed in Siberia, Alaska or Greenland, or perished in the heavens?"

Just then Frank's disgusted reflections were interrupted by the arrival of the train, and he saw a short man with white hair, a red face, and a foreign appearance alight.

He wore a dark traveling suit and cap, carried a valise, and had the appearance of a German. He was a stranger, at all events.

As soon as he alighted, he left the platform and started off through the town, followed by a sharp glance from Frank.

Some freight and baggage were exchanged from the cars to the platform, and with a hissing of steam and the clanging of its bell, the engine started, and the train began to move ahead.

Before it gathered much headway another man suddenly alighted.

He was a person of ordinary build, wearing a blue flannel suit, a Derby hat, and had red hair, a full red beard, and bushy red eyebrows.

His complexion was florid, and his movements singularly quick.

The moment he got off the station he glided over behind a tree, where he stood crouched a moment, peering out at the first man to alight.

Frank was surprised at the suspicious actions of the man, and with his interest aroused, he thrust the letter in his pocket and sank back

into the dense shadow of the depot, from whence he watched all the actions of the red-bearded stranger with the keenest curiosity.

When the little man had gained a few hundred yards in advance, the red-bearded stranger flitted out from behind the tree and followed him like a phantom, dodging into the shadiest spots, lurking in obscure places, and otherwise evincing a desire to conceal his actions.

"Can he be a detective?" thought Frank. "I'll shadow him and see, for he is not doing this for nothing. Ah, there goes the little fellow out of the city to the suburbs, toward my house."

He hastened after the two men.

When he arrived at a secluded spot, midway between his elegant mansion, with its great workshop at the end of the grounds, he saw the red-bearded man glide up behind the other and clutch him by the throat!

Instantly a fearful struggle ensued between them, and Frank saw the red-bearded man pull a dagger from his breast pocket and make efforts of the most desperate kind to stab the other.

"Foul play!" gasped Frank, in horror. "He is an assassin!"

He ran up to the struggling pair and heard the short individual gasp:

"Simon Grimm, you won't kill me!"

"Blow me if you'll enter Reade's house alive, ter ruin me, Hans Jans!"

"You vollow me all de vay from Paris to perwent me?"

"Ay, now, an' I'll do it too. No un'll go ter ther rescue o' Paul St. Malo. His fate must remain a mystery, so's I can inherit ther waster fortun' as 'e lef in Paris. Once this 'ere inventor gits posted 'e vill start off an' baffle mel You shan't do it!"

"Murder! Och, Gott! You—ugh!"

The Dutchman's last words were choked off by the cruel, relentless hands of the sailor, and the keen, glittering knife was raised aloft when Frank dashed forward.

With one blow of his powerful fist he knocked the would-be murderer down, and the knife flew out of his hand.

Scared, the Dutchman scrambled to his feet and ran away.

Up jumped Simon Grimm in a towering passion, a dark scowl upon his face, his teeth gnashing and his eyes blazing.

"Maledictions on ye!" he roared furiously, as he made a rush for Frank. "I'll teach yer ter interfere w' other people's business. Now then, take this 'ere fer yer—oh, ouch!"

He had aimed a blow at Frank that might have felled an ox, but the cool inventor parried it and gave him a swinging right-hander that caught him on the nose and nearly flattened it.

It was instantly followed by a left-handed

upper-cut that blackened one of Grimm's eyes and spun him around, when up shot Frank's foot and Grimm got such a sternward kick that he was fairly lifted up from the ground.

"Take that with the compliments of Frank Reade, Jr., and do not remain in this town five minutes," said the angry inventor, "or I'll have you tarred and feathered, you assassin!"

"Frank Reade, Jr.?" echoed the sailor, utterly aghast.

"Do not look so amazed. I know all about you, as the Paris authorities wrote me your history. And since I know what a mean spirited wretch you are, depend upon it I shall embark on this journey, just to thwart you. If I can find any trace of St. Malo, I shall apprise the executors of his will!"

"Never!" hissed Grimm, savagely, as a baleful gleam shot from his sullen eyes. "Yer won't foil me! I'll kill yer afore I will allow yer to! Mark me, I'll have spite on yer fer wot yer jest did ter me. Yer a marked man! I'll foller yer all over ther world, but I'll avenge myself, an' baffle any attempts yer may make ter cheat me outur my rights!"

Frank was rapidly losing his temper.

He saw that Simon Grimm was a malignant man, of strong passions, and a brutal turn of mind, who would keep his vow of vengeance.

Upon the ground at Frank's feet laid Hans Jans' valise where it had fallen, during the struggle, and spilt its contents.

There were some underclothes and a packet of papers, and the moment Simon Grimm saw them he uttered a stifled cry, and sprang forward to snatch up the documents when he found himself confronted by a revolver in the hand of the inventor.

"Back! Back! Touch them at your peril!" cried Frank, sternly.

"Don't fire!" gasped Grimm, recoiling with his hands up.

"Go, or I'll blow your brains out!"

"Mercy! Mercy! I'll leave!"

And with a shudder of terror Grimm darted away at full speed. He paused some distance away, and shook his fist at Frank.

"Remember my oath!" he yelled malevolently. Then he sprang in amid some bushes and vanished.

"That's an easy method of getting rid of a viper!" muttered Frank, as he gathered up Hans Jans' effects, put them in the valise, and started off for home with it.

Upon reaching his library, Frank took out the packet of papers and saw that it was addressed to him.

An examination of their contents gave him a detailed description of the probable course taken by the balloon St. Malo was in, based on a scientific theory of the Polar air currents and other data that would give Frank a fair clew as to the localities in which he might probably find some traces of the missing aeronauts.

He had scarcely finished poring over the papers, when a red-headed old Irishman, attired in an absurdly stylish suit of clothes, ran into the room.

He was a rollicking, belligerent, fun-loving old friend of Frank's who had often accompanied him on various strange voyages.

"Barney O'Shea!" exclaimed Frank, starting up. "Why—what's the matter?"

"Faix ther hull town is in excitement," panted Barney, wiping the perspiration from his brow. "Shure a man wuz kilt in the road."

"Who was he?"

"A lethter in his pocket wuz soigned Hans Jans."

"Good Heaven! The Parisian surrogate's clerk! Who killed him?"

"Shure an' it's meself wuz arrested fer it, a witness asayin' that a red-headed man shot ther little fat Dootchman."

"Simon Grimm has accomplished his purpose!" murmured Frank.

"But," continued Barney, ignoring the interruption, "whin I wuz brung up afore ther joodge, ther witness swore that ther wan as kilt ther Dootchman had ther loikes av red whiskers. An' as me own gob is shaved as clane as ther leg av a dook, I wor discharged."

Frank went out and apprised the authorities of what he knew about the matter, and then called to France:

"Hans Jans was shot dead by Simon Grimm. I have his papers. Within a fortnight I shall be on my way to Greenland in search of the missing balloonists. Our authorities are searching for Grimm."

"FRANK READE, JR."

CHAPTER II.

LOST BY A MAGNET.

ON the following afternoon, while Frank was

attending the coroner's inquest over the remains of Hans Jans, an elderly gentleman with a smooth face, closely-cut gray hair, and a quiet suit of black on, entered the immense workshop of the Wizard of Readestown.

He was known as Dr. Vaneyke, a celebrated scientist, who had accompanied Frank on many of his adventurous trips, and was an intimate friend of the inventor's.

A cry of surprise escaped his lips, and he came to a pause.

In the middle of the workshop stood a large, queer ice-boat.

It was built on a singular model.

The triangular frame-work of the running gear had three spiked and graduated wheels on each side and two in front; there was a covered deck-house similar to a stage coach, with a plate glass turret in front, while the rig of sails was after the schooner style.

Spring bearings for the three curved steel runners admitted of their recoil up into the ends of the cross-beams of wood-covered steel; the wheels were capable of being raised or lowered by mechanism; the shape of the lower part of the deck-house clearly demonstrated that it would float like a boat in the water, and the spokes of the wheels were bladed with propellers.

"Frank has been inventing again," muttered Dr. Vaneyke, as he admired the graceful outlines of the peculiar ice-boat. "It is as light as it can be made of thin steel plates, and has a motive power of its own, in case the masts or sails meet with an accident. She steers by a wheel in the pilot-house; the windows are guarded with woven wire shutters; there is an electric search-light on the pilot-house, and a raised platform runs around the deck-house, from which the sails are managed."

With his curiosity aroused, the old scientist stepped on board the boat, and, entering one of the side doors, he passed through the invention.

Everything was padded to exclude the cold, and heat was generated by electricity, for distribution throughout the rooms by a complicated apparatus that was stowed in a small compartment under the floor.

There were three compartments illuminated by electric arc lights.

The end one evidently was meant for a combined kitchen and dining-room, the next was a general store room for provisions and equipments, and the one next to the pilot house was furnished with berths, for sleeping.

All the electrical connections were controlled by levers on a switch-board, placed in front of the wheel, and besides every practical necessity being furnished for such a trip as the ice-boat would be called upon to make, there was a luxuriousness in every detail that ascended to magnificence.

"Combining the speed of the wheels to the impetus given the boat by the vast sail area," muttered the doctor, "this boat ought, according to the records of these flyers, make a mile in thirty seconds."

Just as the doctor came to this conclusion, the shop door was suddenly opened and banged shut, and a black man rushed in, shouting:

"Hey, dar! Hey, dar! Mobe on outer dat! C'm on yo', honey! I see yo' hidin' in dar! Doan' yo' try fo' ter fool dis chile, boss, kase I'se got a gun in dis yar pocket, an' I'se gwine ter drill yo' wif a bullet—yo' heah!"

"Hold on, Pomp, it's me!" said the doctor, emerging from the pilot house.

"Oh, fo' de Lawd's sake! I done tink yo' war a stranger, doctah," replied the new comer, who was a fat negro, attired in a terrific suit of plaid.

He was another of Frank's intimate friends, who with Vaneyke and Barney had gone with him on his various trips, and like the Irishman, he lived in Readestown with his wife and family, but invariably could be found at the home of the noted inventor, helping him to construct his contrivances.

"Where is Frank?" queried the doctor.

"Dunno, boss, out I reckon. But yo' been away, doctah?"

"Yes, spending a few weeks in New York at the convention of a geographical society, where I've been gaining some points on the land of crimson snow, up in the northern unexplored regions. Anything new going on here?"

"Massa Frank an' gwine ter Greenland wif me an' Barney an' dis yere ice-boat, fo' ter hunt fo' two missin' balloonists."

"You don't say! And hasn't he numbered me with the party?"

"Done said dat yo'd be shuah fo' ter go, sah."

"Then the knowledge I just acquired of Greenland may be of great service to us."

Just then Frank came in with Barney, and after the first salutations the inventor explained what had happened, and arranged on the spot for the projected trip to Greenland.

"I am not actuated especially by malice against Simon Grimm," said Frank, as he exhibited the diagrams, map and written explanations that Hans Jans had brought from Paris. "Far from it. We four have been off in search of adventure so much that I could scarcely live without it. In my idle moments I constructed this ice-boat, and as a fair chance has presented itself for me to try it, I will take advantage of it now."

"I have inspected the boat throughout," said the doctor, "and if I estimate correctly, it will be a marvel of speed, safety, comfort and utility. Let us now sketch out our plan of procedure, and by the time you hear from Paris again we will be ready to go."

The four thereupon eagerly began to discuss the project, and soon had the matter arranged to their mutual satisfaction.

Then they dissected the Snow-Bird, as the ice-boat was called, for it was built portably, and as they packed the sections away in the cases Frank had prepared for them, with their living and hunting equipments, the doctor paused to ask the inventor:

"Why did you build the deck-house in this odd shape?"

"Suppose we were to run off, or break through the ice, into the water?"

"Ah! And the peculiar shape of the runners?"

"They will often encounter deep snow, and must act like a sledge."

"I see. The wheels can be raised when in disuse—is that the idea?"

"Exactly. When in the water, they will act like paddle wheels."

"A good combination, truly, Frank."

When everything was packed up, a stock of canned provisions, all sorts of instruments, liquors, fur clothing, and electric chemicals were laid in, and extra ropes, canvas and rigging were packed in a case.

Then the entire outfit was sent to New York.

The four adventurers had only to take leave of friends and relatives, and take their departure on the train.

A cable dispatch reached Frank from France just as he was departing.

It said:

"Grimm, a murderer, will get guillotined instead of St. Malo's fortune. Bury Hans Jans decently at any expense, and guard his effects. Our gratitude will be great for any information concerning the viscount. All expenses will be defrayed. RENAUD."

Jans was buried already.

Frank had defrayed the expenses himself.

Upon the arrival of the four in New York, they shipped the cases containing the ice-boat and their equipments on board the ship Polar Queen, and took passage on her themselves, her destination being Port Manvers on the Labrador coast.

From there they would have to await their chance to cross the Greenland sea and get up in Davis Strait to Frederickshaab, on some boat.

The Polar Queen was laden with a miscellaneous freight of general merchandise and was to bring back a cargo of furs; her captain was a surly man strongly addicted to drink, and the crew was a mixed one of Danes and Norwegians, the first mate being not much more amiable than his superior officer.

Frank took an instinctive dislike to him from the first.

He had a smooth shaven face, very dark complexion, and while his hair was closely cut, and jet black, his eyebrows looked as if by some accident they had been completely burned off.

Nor was the mate disposed to be friendly to Frank.

For he chanced to be Simon Grimm!

Fearing arrest for the murder of Hans Jans, he had thus disguised himself and shipped for a foreign, unfrequented port, where he meant to desert the Polar Queen, and remain until his crime was forgotten.

The moment he saw Frank, all the rancid malevolence in his brutal nature was aroused, for he argued that if it hadn't been for the existence of the inventor he would not have been in his present plight.

"Mebbe a time'll come when I can safely claim St. Malo's fortune," he whispered to himself. "But 'twon't be so if this 'ere feller is allowed ter find 'im, an' aid to get 'im back in France. I'll have my revenge now fer sure, an' ter git it I'll risk my own life an' sacrifice this ship an' its crew!"

Frank did not suspect that his enemy was on board, and the vessel sailed up the coast with favorable weather until it reached Cape Rose off Newfoundland, when the dense fogs that overhang that region veiled the ship like a shroud and made navigation dangerous. It was night when they weathered the cape, and the mate was at the wheel all alone, the watch on deck all being up forward attending to one of the studding sails which had blown from its bolt ropes.

He glanced around cautiously, but did not see any one, although at that moment Frank was standing against the side of the galley amidships in the shadow looking squarely at him.

Feeling assured that he was not seen, Grimm took a small horseshoe magnet from his pocket and opened the glass slide in the binnacle, the light streaming from which showed Frank all he was doing, yet the inventor did not see what the magnet was.

Grimm slid the little magnet beneath the compass disc in such a manner that the needle was instantly diverged from its north pole several degrees, showing thereby a false northing.

"It's done," muttered the rascally mate, with a dark look upon his face, as he closed the slide and hastily resumed his clutch on the wheel. "Instid o' this wessel a-goin' ter Port Manvers, ther quartermaster 'll drive her straight up inter Davis Straight. Ther compass 'll play false. When we gits in ther ice an' death is a-starin' us in ther face, I'll have my chance ter git squar wi' Reade by helpin' ter hang him from a yard-arm, an—"

"Good-evening, mate," interrupted Frank, appearing just then. "Bad weather?"

"Ay, ay, sir!" growled the other, hoarsely, as he disguised the tones of his voice and averted his face to hide the dark scowl on his rugged brow.

"How long before we get out of this Newfoundland fog?"

"I dunno!" snapped Grimm, sourly.

Frank stared at him with ill-concealed contempt, and turning abruptly upon his heel, he walked away, muttering in disgust so Grimm heard him:

"He's the most unamiable brute I ever spoke to."

There was a lurid gleam in the basilisk eyes of Grimm as they followed him.

"Add insult ter injury, cuss yer!" he growled, in savage tones. "It won't be long, though, afore we are quits, my fine gentleman! The cappen an' crew already is suspicious o' yer on account o' ther mystery yer have wrapped about yer designs an' ther silence yer keeps about yer business."

Following out Frank's advice our friends had certainly been very uncommunicative to the captain and crew, and their reticence and the manner in which they avoided speaking about themselves had aroused a feeling of intense suspicion about them aboard the Polar Queen.

Several days passed by after leaving the fog banks, but no land was sighted, and the ship was long past due, when a feeling of alarm took possession of every one, and the captain took his reckoning.

To his amazement and fear he found that the vessel had overshot her destined latitude by several hundred miles, and that night the ship became enmeshed in the drift ice coming down from the north.

In one night it froze around her, and in the struggle that ensued to extricate her the ship only became more entangled, and finally was brought to a stop by the shore floes off the Greenland coast, south of Cape Desolation.

In Arctic parlance the ship was "nipped."

"But how, for God's sake, did we get here?" the frantic captain demanded of every one as they stood blankly upon the deck. "The compass was followed true and yet we are far, far from our correct course."

"I'll tell you how it happened!" exclaimed Grimm, glaring at Frank.

"Do you know? Out with it, man!"

"He," said Grimm, pointing at Frank, "put a horseshoe magnet in the binnacle!"

"Great Heaven!" cried the captain, in horror, and a groan pealed from the crew.

"You lie!" exclaimed Frank.

"I seen him," said Grimm, firmly, "an' here," he added, withdrawing the magnet so that all saw him do it, "is proof o' wot I ses. Yer all know how mysterious ther wuz, an' I knows he hates me and did this fer spite."

"Ah!" cried Frank, suddenly recognizing the man. "It is Simon Grimm, the assassin!"

"Hang the rascal!" cried the half-maddened captain. "This treachery merits death!"

With a fierce cry the crew rushed toward Frank.

CHAPTER III.

CAST AWAY ON THE ICE.

"HOLD! Back, men, back with you! The first to advance will perish!"

Cool and calm Frank stood facing the crew, with a revolver in his hand, and the sailors of the Polar Queen came to a sudden pause.

Frank's three friends also drew their weapons and crowded around him.

Simon Grimm and the captain stood at the head of the men.

"Put up your weapons!" exclaimed the skipper with a frown. "Your treachery is exposed. You have driven us to our ruin by your fiendish scheme. But, fools that you are, you failed to consider that you would share the general fate of the rest of us."

"Captain, you are mistaken," firmly replied Frank. "The scoundrel beside you did it. Now I recollect seeing him in the act, while the ship was weathering Cape Race, off the Newfoundland banks."

"Impossible! My first officer—"

"Is an escaped murderer, fleeing from justice, with his face shaved and his red hair dyed, his eyebrows burned off, and his voice changed. I am on my way to baffle his designs on a man's fortune, and he has taken this means of trying to thwart me. Believe me, sir, I tell the truth."

"He lies like fury!" snarled Grimm, vehemently.

Just then the little cabin boy advanced, saluted the captain, and casting a half-timid glance at Grimm, he said:

"If you please, sir, I think Mr. Reade is right."

"What do you mean, you brat?" roared the skipper.

"I saw Mr. Grimm put that magnet in the compass box too, but I was afraid to tell on him, for fear he might beat me."

"Why didn't you tell me about it at the time?"

"Because, sir, I did not know what the magnet was going to do."

"Cuss the young swab, he's a-ringin' in wi' them fellers!" yelled Grimm. "They wants ter get ter Greenlan', an' this are ther means as they employed ter do it, knowin' our ship'd stop at Port Manvers, an' they not a-wantin' ter wait in the port till a ship'd come an' take 'em across."

"How did you know I want to go to Greenland, if all I said ain't true?" quickly asked Frank. "Every one on board knows that none of we four uttered a single word to any one that would betray our intentions!"

This was a telling shot, and the mate turned pale, and stammered:

"I—I—only—guessed—at—it."

"You see he is lying and guilty, captain!" said Frank, turning to the skipper, who was intently studying Grimm's face.

"I don't know which of you to believe!" said the skipper, in dissatisfied tones. "To make sure, I'll put you, your friends and the mate in irons, and carry you back to port for trial."

"I object!" said Frank, decisively.

"You have your choice of doing that, or being driven overboard to stay on the ice. I won't have you on board my craft at liberty."

Frank glanced out over the broad expanse of hummocky ice and saw that it was solid enough, looking to the eastward, in the direction of Cape Desolation, then a league distant.

"Shall we leave the ship?" he asked, turning to his friends.

"Bejabbers, I'm in fer a ruction forst!" exclaimed Barney. "Give me a bit av a schtick, an' I'll break their heads, or dthrow ther hull crew ashore, single handed! Will some wan give me a shillelah?"

"If we could put the ice-boat together, I think we would be safe to venture a trip to the land," remarked Vaneyke.

"Ise gwine ter took a eah offer dat murderer's head befo' I go," said Pomp, deliberately, and the dead-shot coon raised his pistol, took quick aim at Grimm and fired.

The ball flew through Grimm's ear, and left a round hole in it.

"Murder!" he yelled in agony, as he clapped his hand to the wound.

"Tu'n aroun' dar, an' I pierce de yodder one so yo' kin war rings in dem," chuckled Pomp. "Dis coon am de crackest shot in de whole worl'."

He took aim at the terrified Grimm again, but with one rush and a flying leap the rascal crossed the deck, and went over the weather bulwarks, down onto the ice.

Over and over he rolled; then he scrambled to his feet and ran away as fast as he could.

"Nex!" shouted Pomp, brandishing his weapon. "He done cheat me outer anudder bull's-eye, an' now he am swarin' dat he am gwine ter harm me de same's Massa Frank, by golly!"

The crew retreated, but the captain stood his ground, and said:

"Make him put up that weapon, Reade, or it will go hard with him."

"He is his own master," coolly replied Frank. "If you want to settle this matter quietly, have your men rig a tackle and fall, lift the cases containing my freight out on the ice, and we will leave the ship, although we are innocent of the crime."

The captain spoke to his men, and they set to work and got Frank's outfit from the hold, and set the cases on the floe.

Cast ashore on the ice in this cold-blooded manner by the skipper, who did not know whether they had any means of helping themselves, our four hardy adventurers opened case after case, took out the contents, and rapidly put the ice boat together.

The astonishment of the crew of the Polar Queen was intense to see the large and graceful Snow Bird gradually assume its proportions before their eyes, until at last it stood complete, and all its equipage was stowed away on board.

Simon Grimm had vanished behind an ice hill.

"Where are you going with that thing?" shouted the captain, curiously.

"That is none of your business," flatly replied Frank. "I wish you luck. For our part, we are better off than you are!"

"Are yez ready?" demanded Barney, seizing the main sheet halyards.

"Ready," replied Frank, entering the pilot-house. "Pomp, man the fore-sheet. Doctor, take care of the jib, if you please. Up jib and main."

Up fluttered the main-sail, the jib followed, and caught by the northwest wind, away glided the Snow Bird under a billow of white duck, with the speed of a race horse.

There was no need of the fore-sail, so they furled it down, and having the jib and main-sheet halyards fastened to the cleats, the sheet lines were trimmed in and secured.

Swift and smooth went the boat, only shaking a trifle when the runners went over an unusually high hummock, and Frank, working the wheel, found that the stern runner steered her as good as any rudder would a ship at sea.

"Hurrah! She is a success!" the inventor cried delightedly, his eyes flashing and sparkling with pleasure. "But let me try the wheels!"

He grasped a small lever, turned it, and the wheels dropped to the surface of the ice, when a retrograde movement was felt.

The spikes acted, held rigidly as a brake, and stopped the boat, although there was every danger of the wind tripping her up with its strong pressure against the sails.

Frank pressed a button on the key-board, and an electric connection was made with the wheels, that he graduated to any desired rate of force with a lever; and when the wheels began to revolve, the speed of the boat became so great, that had not the turret been round in front, the force of the wind pressure would have broken the glasses.

The wheels made a buzzing and crackling noise, owing to the propeller blades on the spokes and the spikes on the rims.

Frank stopped the electrical machinery.

There was no need of extra speed at present.

The inventor headed for the coast, and in exactly three minutes after leaving the ship the Snow Bird was within a stone's throw of the shore, when Frank saw that the ice ahead was rotten.

Whirling around the wheel, he turned away from the shore of the cape, and the boat flashed across the ice floe on another tack that carried them along parallel with the shore.

The doctor went inside to examine the electric machinery, and Barney and Pomp remained out on the deck to attend the sails.

By this time night was falling, and after a run of several miles up the coast, the ice-boat came up in the wind close to the rocky shore, when down came the sails again, and leaving them unfurled, Barney and Pomp went inside to attend to the preparation of supper.

There was a great deal to do, getting everything stowed away in its proper place after they finished eating, and several hours passed by.

Then a startled cry pealed from Frank's lips.

Glancing out the pilot-house window, he beheld a thrilling scene.

"The ship is on fire!" he shouted to his friends.

All hands ran to the windows, and anxiously peered out.

Far in the distance a livid mass of flames was shooting up to the sky, in the direction where they had left the Polar Queen.

"What a frightful calamity!" exclaimed the doctor gravely.

"Begob, it do be retribution on the bastes fer cashtin' us ashore," the Irishman exclaimed severely, "an' bad cess to thim, they deserve it too."

"Hardly," interposed Frank compassionately. "Just think of the ill-fated crew being left foodless and without means of returning home on this bleak barren coast. They all may perish like dogs."

"How de deuce dat ship done catch afire?" wondered Pomp aloud.

"We can soon find out," observed Frank.

"Let us go to their aid."

"With all my heart!" assented Vaneyke charitably.

"Perhaps they may be in danger from the fire, and we can save them or aid in securing some of their goods for them."

"Be heavens, it's sorry I am for the spalpeens," said Barney, bursting out of his cocoon of severity, "and it's ther willin' hand I'm alwuz schtickin' out ter thim as nades it, so I am. Be ther polper av Clonakilty, hurry, or they may perish, an' me not ahelpin' thim."

Forgetful now of the injury done to them, the four brave and generous fellows hastily raised the sails, and away darted the Snow Bird on its errand of mercy, its white wings tacking against the wind.

Her speed was something marvelous.

It was getting very dark, and in fear of capsizing over a crack in the ice, or plunging into a hole, Frank started the electric lights in the house, and in the search light on the roof of the turret, when a streak shot out a mile ahead.

The light danced and wavered on the icy crystals, making them sparkle and flash like diamonds as they shot toward the burning ship.

Within a few minutes they were near the Polar Queen, but all of the hull was then in a roaring, seething mass of scorching flame that was fast melting the ice that bound her fast to the floe.

Nothing could be seen of any one on the vessel, but the doctor suddenly pointed off to the left, and shouted:

"See there, Frank, see there!"

"Merciful Heaven, the captain and his mate, shooting at each other!"

"Ha! There goes Grimm down through a hole in the ice! But he clutches the edge, and sustains himself."

"Now the captain is in danger, for there's a bear—a polar bear."

The huge white beast had come from behind an ice hill near the captain, and just as he was about to fire a shot at the helpless mate, the bear uttered a roar, ran toward him, and rising up on its haunches, it made an attack.

Before the unfortunate captain could defend himself the enormous monster caught him in a tight embrace.

Foreseeing that it would be impossible to stop the Snow Bird without tripping it up in time to render the captain their aid, Frank shouted to his friends:

"Arm yourselves, and fire at the bear!"

Out on the platform rushed the doctor, Barney and Pomp, armed with rifles, and clad in their fur clothing.

As the Snow Bird went flying past the bear, three sharp reports pealed out, and the brute dropped the captain.

Around came the ice boat on another tack, and again it rushed toward the bear, when a second volley broke the stillness.

Snarling and growling, the wounded bear dropped down upon all fours and went lumbering toward the prostrate captain.

"Kill the beast with the next shot, or it will kill the man!" shouted Frank.

Once more the three rifles were aimed and fired, as the Snow Bird went flying by the infuriated monster.

CHAPTER IV.

BOMBARDED BY ICEBERGS.

BATHED in the lurid glare of the flames from the burning ship, the scene presented upon the ice-floe was a thrilling one as the ice-boat shot past the polar bear and the prostrate captain.

The doctor, Barney and Pomp had a bead drawn upon the beast, and as the crack of their rifles echoed across the ice, the bear uttered a fearful growl and fell over upon its side dead.

It was fairly riddled with bullets, and nothing but its tough hide saved it from destruction in the first instance.

The Snow Bird whizzed on a short distance past the captain, then Frank brought it up into the wind, and as the sails were lowered, it slowly glided over to where the bear lay.

Hastily scrambling to his feet, the captain glanced first at the bear, then at the ice-boat, and with a long drawn sigh of relief, he exclaimed:

"Thank Heaven, the beast is dead! I thought my doom was sealed."

"We were more merciful than you were to cast us adrift here," said Frank, emerging from the turret.

"You have returned good for evil by saving my life," admitted the captain.

"Well, let it pass," carelessly replied Frank.

"Where is your crew?"

"They have taken to the boats, and are waiting for me in yonder channel."

"How did the ship get afire?"

"We caught Simon Grimm doing it!"

"Ah! Now you believe in his guilt, don't you?"

"I am sure he put the magnet in the compass to lead us astray."

"Where is he now?"

"Fell through that hole in the ice. I hope he is drowned."

"He isn't clinging to the edge of the ice any longer."

"Probably he has gone under, since he has vanished."

"Weren't you and he shooting at each other when the bear appeared?"

"I was trying to wreak justice on him for setting my ship on fire."

"I trust that he has got his deserts. But what do you intend to do now?"

"Embark in a boat with my men, and row through the channel to Cape Desolation. The nearest town is Julianshaab. There we may get a ship to carry us back to civilization."

"Out of pity for your distress, I am willing to forgive your brutality, and take you and your men on my icy boat to Lichtenfels, where you will be safe until some passing sealer or whaler picks you up."

"No. I am much obliged. You are merciful. After what I did to you, I must refuse to accept any favor at your hands. You shame me, I'll admit. We will trust ourselves to the mercy of the sea. If you will go along, I would be glad to take you all, to redeem myself a little."

"Our mission will carry us far north of here, into the Arctic," said Frank, "and we will remain. Captain, a safe journey to you."

"Farewell, Mr. Reade," said the skipper, walking away. "If by chance it should transpire that Simon Grimm is yet alive, and you should meet the scoundrel, shoot him down like a dog!"

The captain reached the channel, embarked in a boat, and the crew of the Polar Queen rowed rapidly away to sea in the gloom, watching the ship until it burned to the water's edge, and then sunk forever.

"Pomp," said Frank, "skin that bear, secure the best portions of its meat, and we will start off coasting along here toward Upernivik."

The darky did as Frank told him, and when everything was in readiness, the ice-boat's sails were raised, and she sped off along the shore.

Almost the entire Greenland shore is bordered with floes, called "land-ice," so the navigators had a clear field of travel for their swift boat.

In that region, day breaks about two o'clock in the morning, so our friends were obliged to turn day into night, and vice-versa.

"Do you think the crew of the Polar Queen will reach Julianshaab in safety, doctor?" questioned Frank, as they sped along.

"Provided there is not too much ice in the way they will," replied Vaneyke. "It is curious that when Eric the Red was banished from Norway and settled in Julianshaab, which he then called Ericsfiord, there was not much ice hereabouts. The climate must have changed much since the year 983."

"Shure, an' that spalpeen 'll be forgot in 900 years more," said the Irishman, with a grin, "an' it's Barney the Red they'll be talking about up here. I knew me name'd go down in history since I wor' born, fer it's a noted family I came from. Shure, me father wor' transported fer breakin' a nagur's head, me uncle wor' hung fer stalin' a goat, an'—"

"An' yo'll drap dead fo' tellin' lies!" interrupted Pomp, with a chuckle.

What reply Barney might have made it is hard to say, but he was interrupted by a fearful booming of the ice.

Reports like thunder were going through the floe, and the great field of ice was shaking, parting in great fissures that shot through it with deafening reports and fearful grinding noises.

"The floe is splitting to pieces!" exclaimed Frank, in startled tones.

"What under heaven is the cause of this?" gasped the doctor.

"Look off there to the northward and you will see."

"Icebergs floating against the floe!"

"There are a dozen of them, carried by the tide, only a few of which have struck. When the rest hit, this field will be demolished."

There was every need for them to fly for their lives, for the enormous bergs, charging upon the outer edge of the flow, driven by wind and tide, were bombarding it in a terrible manner.

When they struck, enormous masses were flung up in vast hills broken into fragments, and the towering bergs letting fall showers of enormous cakes, added to the devastation.

Three of the bergs had collided with the floe in rapid succession, splitting hundreds of gaping fissures in it that radiated in all directions, and then adhered to the sides, while the others came drifting along, bent upon the same destructive mission.

"We must fly for our lives!" gasped the doctor. "Already it is hazardous to attempt crossing those wide crevices, for the runners of the boat may get wedged in and capsize the Snow Bird."

"I'll run her in nearer the shore," said Frank. He did so.

Unfortunately the ice was thin and rotten, and they had to tack out again, and exercise the greatest care when they came to any of the yawning fissures, in order to avoid getting in trouble.

With a thunderous crash the fourth berg struck the floe, and a groaning and wheezing sound came from the breaking ice.

Before any of the cracks could reach the Snow-Bird, she had swiftly passed out of the way, and glided like a streak of light upon a level field which extended many miles ahead.

There her utmost speed was shown, and in a marvelously short time she left the battering bergs and dangerous ground far astern.

"I have traveled in dangerous countries before," said Frank, as he brought the boat up in a sheltered nook, under the lee of a huge and frowning cliff, "but this is certainly the most dangerous I have ever been in before. We are going to get more than we bargained for, I'm afraid. Peril stares us in the face from above, from below, and all sides."

There was a seal lying beside an opening in the ice some distance away, and the doctor was just about to comment upon it, when down from the top of the cliff there shot an enormous rock.

It flew over the ice-boat with a hum, and striking the seal on the head, it killed the beast instantly.

The four adventurers glanced up at the cliff top, and saw a huge bear standing upon its haunches, the bear having, (as these creatures have often been seen to do,) hurled down the rock with such accurate aim.

Upon seeing with what success it met, the monster got upon all fours and went lumbering away to get down upon the floe to secure the meal it had thus provided by its own sagacity.

"It is wonderful how Providence imbues the dumbest of beasts with the instinct to provide themselves with food," commented Frank.

"There are blind fishes in underground caverns, that maintain their lives by hunting for food in the lakes, and even a new born child will nourish itself."

Barney and Pomp hauled down the sails, as they resolved to stop there until six the next day, and the doctor took out the plans and specifications Hans Jans had brought from France, and glanced over them while Frank turned off the electric current, to extinguish the light as broad daylight was then streaming over the land of desolation.

They saw the bear get down upon the ice, and after tearing the dead seal to pieces, and gorging itself upon the fatty meat, it dragged away a huge piece by its teeth and disappeared amid the rocks on shore, probably bent upon feeding its cubs.

"The French people are ingenious," the doctor explained, presently, looking up from the

papers he was perusing. "In reference to their impression about the landing of the two balloonists, St. Malo and Beauvais, of Brest, upon the northern shores of Greenland, they offer a most plausible theory for imagining that was the aeronauts' fate."

"You mean the wind currents?" questioned Frank.

"Exactly. Here is the way their meteorological expert figures it out. Calculating France as the starting point, the aeronauts reached the island of Spitzbergen. Due north of it, going over the north pole, is Alaska, west of it is Greenland, and east of it lies Siberia. Not reaching Alaska, the supposition is that the winds were unfavorable. Winds were all the balloonists had to depend upon. Strongest winds would be encountered coming from the east. That would be Siberia. Such a wind would carry the balloon westward. That would be to this country. A noted scientist advances the theory that all winds blow with equal force from each quarter of the globe up here, and meeting at the pole, scatter and rush off in all directions. If the balloon was caught in the vortex of such a meeting of the winds, nothing would remain of it, for it would be torn to shreds."

"Our only inference then, as the French figure it," said Frank, "is that the balloon, struck by a strong, easterly air current, must have been swept to Greenland. Our own judgment, as well as the theory of the men who figured this thing out, then tells us to prosecute our search here, as the most probable place in which to find the two missing men, in case they are yet alive and to be found."

"You are right," said Vaneyke.

"No other theory could have brought us here," said Frank.

"Then we must search the most northern latitudes. There must be inhabitants up there, and white men as well as Esquimaux."

"White men?" echoed Frank, incredulously. "Ay, white men," assented the doctor. "Recollect the history of Eric the Red? Returning from his three years' banishment to Iceland, he brought twenty-five ships laden with adventurous people away, to settle in this country. Only fourteen reached their destination—the others were lost. Norwegians, Danes, Icelanders, Britans and people from the Hebrides came; new towns were built, farms flourished, and ambitious men searched up and down the coast to display their enterprise, some going as far north as latitude 75 degrees. Upernavic lies in latitude 72 50, and a stone was found near there in 1824 by Sir Edward Parry, on which was cut in Runic letters

Erling Sigvatson and Biorn Thordarson and Eindrid Oddson on Saturday before Ascension week raised these marks and cleared ground—1135.

Scattered broadcast all over this bleak land as the adventurers were, it is as likely as not that some of them settled in the north, and their ancestors yet live, as a monument of their pluck."

"It would be a strange revelation to civilization if we could find such a lost race of people," said Frank.

"And I am sure we will," said the doctor, confidently.

Shortly afterwards they turned in and enjoyed six hours sleep, but when they awakened, it was snowing hard and furiously, while a fearful gale was sweeping up from the southwest.

To remain where they were was hazarding the chance of being snowbound for an indefinite period, and Frank suggested driving before the gale to run away from the storm, to which the rest assented.

While Pomp was preparing their hot breakfast, they set reefed sails and away dashed the ice boat to the northward, enveloped in the dangerous veil of whirling snow flakes, and all hands on the alert.

CHAPTER V.

THE ICE-BOAT GOES AFLOAT.

"Up with your wheel quick, Frank, and bring her about, or—"

Crash! came a sound of breaking ice, interrupting the doctor.

There sounded a loud splash.

The boat shot from the edge of the ice into an open sheet of water which laid hidden in the snow storm athwart her course.

The broad, wide-reaching runner-arms and the flat bottom of the ice-boat prevented its sinking below the railed footpath that encompassed the deck-house, and she floated like a cork!

In a moment the wind carried her far away from the ice floe and they suddenly lost sight of it in the blinding snow, and drifted far out upon the water before they fairly knew what happened.

Within a few moments more they were lost on the water!

So dense were the clouds of falling flakes they could not see a dozen feet beyond the bend of the bowsprit.

It had been impossible to avert the catastrophe, for the Snow Bird had been speeding along for several hours before the bitterly cold wind and driving flakes, and had gathered an appalling velocity.

Indeed, it was fortunate that she did strike an obstruction with her long bowsprit instead of plunging into the sea.

Frank regretted having so daringly attempted to ride away from the storm, for it was impossible, and once caught in its midst they could not see where they were going, could not stop the boat and unable to find shelter had to drive along like lightning.

Instead of bewailing their misfortune Frank laughed.

"We are in luck," said he, ruefully. "Luck of a peculiar sort."

"This is much more preferable to rushing headlong through the blinding mist and not knowing where we were going," said Vaneyke.

"Bettah git down dem yere sails," said Pomp, "or dey blow cl'ar outer de bolt-ropes, sah. Dar am mo' resistance in de watah."

"Shure she schwims loike a dook," said Barney, with a relieved look. "But be heavens I thought she would float like a cannon ball."

"She can't capsize, even if all sail was up, on account of the runner-arms," said Frank.

"Still, to prevent her going through the water too fast, you had better lower away the jib and mainsail and I'll put power in her wheels to carry us along."

Barney and Pomp hurried outside, and dropped the mainsheet.

The wind was flapping it fearfully as they got up on the boom to furl it, and a swell in the canvas caught Pomp a whack on the ear.

"G'wan, stop dat now, Barney," he yelled angrily, as he grabbed a reef-point to prevent himself from going overboard. "Dis am no time fo' foolin' chile, yo' heah? Tie down de leech dar, tie it down."

"Slacken off the jib!" shouted Frank out the window. "It is fairly bending the bowsprit, and may break loose from—"

Crash—bang—boom! went the jib just then.

The fierce gust of wind that struck it tore it out of the thimbles up near the block, and the canvas began to beat to and fro, threatening to tear it to shreds.

Leaving Pomp to struggle alone with the mainsail, Barney sprang down to the deck, rushed up forward, and loosening the jib-sheet line, he let it fly.

He was just upon the point of clutching the down haul to bring the canvas to the bowsprit, when the lashing sheet-line struck him a stinging blow about the legs, a blight of it wound around him, and as the sail flapped back he was dashed into the water.

"Howley ham?" he yelled. "Will somebody save me! Ther nagur chucked me overboard fer spoite, be jabers!"

He was dragged along through the icy water, as the line was firmly wound around his legs, and the doctor ran out.

Seizing a boat hook from a rack, he caught the hapless Barney with it by the slack of his pants, and hauled him out of the needles of ice that floated in the water, filling him with agony.

The moment the shivering Irishman was safe on deck, Vaneyke hauled down the refractory jib, and then went to Pomp's assistance.

Within a few moments the main-sail was furled, and the coon was just coming down from the boom, when he saw Barney.

They both blamed each other for the accidents that befell them.

"Give me a club," roared Barney. "I want to kill ther nagur!"

"Heah you am den," shouted Pomp, ducking his head. "I gib yo' a club in de bread basket yo' onary ole slob. Take dis!"

And he charged on Barney like an enraged bull, butted him in the stomach, and ran into the pilot house.

Down went the Irishman, bent double, uttering a dismal groan, and he struck the deck with a thud that made him see stars.

"Save me remains," he gasped. "Shure I'm pulverized entirely."

"Yah, yah, yah!" roared Pomp from the

doorway. "Doan' wanter fool wid dis niggah, honey, if yo' wanter sabe funeral 'spenses!"

"Whoop, 've ebonized gorilla! It's yer muddy gore I'll be havin'" the Irishman roared, and scrambling to his feet, he dashed in, and after Pomp, who retreated to the kitchen, and a moment afterwards the sounds of a terrible scuffle, mingled with the crash of overturned furniture and clattering dishes came out of the apartment.

"Schtop boitin' me nose!" yelled Barney.

"Den doan' yo' kick my shins!" replied Pomp.

"Stop them, doctor," admonished Frank, as he turned a lever and put an electric current in the side wheels. "They'll break everything up."

The doctor went into the back room to do as the inventor asked.

Frank found that the wheels acted admirably, for the runner arms held above the surface of the water, and the boat shape of the hull made the Snow Bird act like a side-wheel steamer.

She went ahead through the water by the force of the wind so fast that the wheels had to be reversed, in order to diminish speed.

It was warm and comfortable within the boat, but outside the fine particles of ice that mingled with the snow made the air so intensely cold that a hoar frost formed upon the thick glass windows.

It was probably owing to this fact that Frank did not observe well where he was going until he suddenly heard the sound of breakers.

"Must be land ahead!" he muttered. "I've kept her due east."

For an instant he was puzzled how to act, for it would not do to run the ice-boat into the breakers and get cast ashore.

He gave the wheel a sudden turn and the boat curved around, when out of the mist there suddenly loomed an enormous wall of ice that towered fully two hundred feet above the boat.

"It is an iceberg!" flashed across Frank's mind.

The boat was going along so fast the same way the berg was floating, that he just had time to swing it around to avoid a collision.

The Snow Bird grazed the side of the berg. Had the bowsprit struck, it would have been splintered.

On dashed the boat beside the berg, when Frank heard the sullen roar of breakers on the other side, almost as close as those on the berg.

His heart began to flutter.

He almost knew what the trouble was.

The next moment his worst fears were realized.

Another enormous berg shot out of the mist and came madly whirling toward the first one, the ice-boat lying between them.

"She will get crushed between the two bergs!" gasped Frank in horrified accents, as with starting eyes, he glanced up at the two mountains of ice towering on either side of him.

The bergs certainly were rushing together, and the shock of two such enormous bodies meeting was sure to prove fearful.

Only one course remained for Frank to follow.

He turned the electric lever all the way around, and like a streak of lightning the boat darted ahead through the waves.

Nearer and nearer came the bergs together, and they almost touched the runner arms and flying wheels, when past them darted the ice-boat.

But she was not yet free from danger, for hardly had she cleared the bergs, when they came together!

The crash that followed, mingled with a grinding and splitting noise, was deafening, great blocks of ice were torn off, and the air became filled with the flying lumps that fell in the sea all around the fugitive boat like so many cannon balls.

Out into the pilot house rushed the doctor, Barney, and Pomp fearfully startled; and they fairly shivered when they saw what perils they had passed through, and yet were in.

"Och, worra, worra, but it's rainin' hail-schtones as big as a house," groaned Barney, as a rattling volley struck all over the boat making it shake and quiver like an aspen.

Boom! Boom! Boom! crashed the two bergs together again.

Another volley of ice-cakes were scattered in the air, and came down in showers through the mist of falling flakes.

"Put on more speed!" cried the doctor.

Hundreds of flying particles again struck the boat.

"I can't; full power is on now," replied Frank. Crash! went the boat just then.

"We've done struck de ice-floe agin," cried Pomp falling headlong.

The boat came to a sudden pause, although the wheels were furiously revolving, and churning the water into foam.

"She has hit against the front wheels," said Frank, peering out the window. "Out on deck, everyone, and get ashore. We must get her up on the ice again, while we have the chance."

While the rest went out, Frank started the front wheels.

As soon as they began to revolve against the submerged edge of the ice floe, the spikes dug in the ice, and dragged the boat ahead.

That brought the front runners up out of the water.

Then she stopped; but she was 'out of range of the flying ice from the bergs.

Ropes were procured, one end fastened to a stanch iron on deck and Barney and Pomp went ashore with the other end, and made a half turn around a hillock of ice with it.

Frank started the side wheels, and lowered the two front ones, which brought them down on a level with the bottom of the runners, and the boat pushed ahead again upon the ice and out of the water.

Barney and Pomp pulled on the rope, and dragged her ahead from the brittle edge of the floe, which was crunching and snapping off under the weight of the boat, threatening to launch it again.

Within a few minutes the boat was clear of the water, and darted ahead over the ice, propelled by its wheels.

The negro and the Irishman got on board again, and off she rushed, none the worse for her immersion excepting for the hard blows she got from the flying blocks of broken ice.

Putting the wheels into use, while Barney, attired in a dry suit, was mending the torn sail out on the end of the bowsprit, the inventor sent the boat along to the eastward, and they got under the lee of the towering cliffs and glaciers on shore, where they were somewhat sheltered from the worst fury of the storm.

Still they were in danger, and although the search light was started, it failed to pierce the fearful clouds of snow and show them where they were going.

"I wish we could find a good anchorage somewhere until the worst of the storm blows over!" exclaimed Frank.

"The cliffs are disappearing, and low lands line the shore," said the doctor. "And look there—wolves—wolves by the score—the hundred!"

Packs of the gaunt, half-starved beasts were rushing across the ice toward the show-clad shore, and the adventurers heard a fearful tumult arising from amid the rocks.

It was the voices of many men, shouting in a strange language.

"Esquimaux!" cried Frank. "The wolves are attacking their village. Come, boys, we cannot go by without lending the poor fellows our aid to fight off the ravenous, half-famished beasts!"

CHAPTER VI.

A DESPERATE FIGHT WITH WOLVES.

"Hurroo fer Ireland, an more power ter me oye!" shouted Barney as the ice boat dashed up to the shore, surrounded by a pack of lean wolves, into which Barney was firing from the end of the bowsprit, his revolver creating deadly havoc among the beasts.

Pomp and the doctor had armed themselves with repeating rifles and stationed themselves out on the platform, from whence they shot amidst the pack, while Frank kept the Snow Bird on, for the rocks, from amid which the shouts of distress came.

The Snow Bird shot ahead like a meteor, all sails down, and the wheels revolving rapidly with a loud whirring sound.

The cliffs which they just passed protected this part of the shore from the worst of the storm, and the four navigators were thus enabled to see some distance in advance of the boat.

"Barney, come in from the bowsprit!" cried Frank, out a window.

"Arrah, be aisly, it's on ther luck out I am," replied Shea.

"We need you in here!"

"Bad luck fer me bones, is it ther bit av a ruction we're agoin' ter have? If so, say so. Begob I'm red hot fer a shindy, an—"

But just then the boat suddenly swung around, to encircle a rock and Barney went flying head over heels from his perch on the bowsprit, down into the soft bed of snow on the ground.

He tumbled over and over, scrambled to his feet, and just as the frame of the boat was whizzing past, he seized the port arm of the forward runners, and leaped up on the board like an acrobat.

"Bully fer me!" chuckled he. "Shure it's the great jumper I bes. Shure I'd have lepped clane up on ther masht, if I hadn't landed here. Come on wid ye, till I make grub fer ther jabberwocks av this land," and peal after peal came from his pistol that turned over the howling and snarling wolves in their tracks.

The moment the Snow Bird passed around the rocks, it came in sight of a village of igloos, or Esquimaux huts.

There were about a dozen of them, bowl-shaped cakes of ice, amid which swarmed the short, fat, fur-clothed men and women armed with spears, clubs and arrows, with which they were fighting back thousands of wolves that descended upon their village.

The hunger maddened beasts came from all directions, and were still swarming into the village by the score.

The plight of the unfortunate people was direful in the extreme, for the ravenous beasts had rent holes in some of the huts, driving out the desperate inmates, and their overwhelming numbers threatened to soon put an end to the Esquimaux.

Valiantly fought the northern Indians, materially aided by their troops of sledge dogs, and a fearful chorus of men's cries, women's screams, wolves' howls, and the barking and yelping of the shaggy dogs arose upon all sides.

The number of wolves assailing the poor natives was almost incredible, and they fought with a fury that was frightful, to overcome the people, in order to devour them.

Numbers gave the cowardly beasts false courage, and they pressed in closer and closer to the besieged Esquimaux, a dozen filling the gaps in their ranks every time one was dispatched.

Like an avalanche the Snow Bird shot up to them.

Some of the brutes, by this time, had sprang upon several of the men, and buried their fangs in the bodies of the unfortunates, tearing madly at their clothing, and striving with savage ferocity to get at their throats.

"Fire!" shouted Frank, as they came in range.

His three friends complied.

Shot after shot pealed out on the cold air.

Beast after beast fell dead in its tracks.

Frightened at the appearance, the noise, and the swift approach of the ice-boat, and scared at the gun shots, the wolves set up a fearful howl, and retreated.

One of the monster's had caught an infant's clothes in its teeth and tore it away from its terrified mother, who ran shrieking after the brute to recover her child.

This was more than Frank could stand.

He had a revolver in his hand, and took aim and fired.

Down went the beast, and the next moment the child was in its mother's arms, and the boat went speeding on.

Through the pack of wolves it dashed, scattering them right and left, when out came Pomp with a number of hand grenades, and the fearful explosions that followed when he flung them among the wolves were mingled with the expiring yelp of those they killed and the agonizing howls of the wounded.

Here, there and everywhere circled the Snow Bird, running down the horde of evil beasts, the rifles and revolvers of her crew dealing death and destruction among the wolves everywhere she went.

With their courage revived upon thus unexpectedly receiving aid the Esquimaux rallied their forces, and the women doing as good work as the men, they charged on the wolves with renewed zeal and killed them by the score.

Within a short space of time the village resembled a slaughter-house, and the number of wounded and slain wolves was immense.

Frank did not pause though.

"Keep at them, boys, until we drive them away!" he cried.

"Watch me kill tin wid wan shot!" roared Barney, delightedly, for he was in his happiest mood when fighting.

As the destructive shots pealed out fast and

furious on all sides the wolves began to weaken and retreated further.

"A fusillade of hand grenades will send them further away!" cried Frank.

It followed the wolves a moment later.

This time the dense mass of beasts broke into a loping run, and scattering they fled in all directions, fairly beaten.

A cheer burst from our friends, that was echoed by a hoarse, guttural cry of victory from the triumphant Esquimaux.

The boat swung around, ran in among the huts, and then came to a pause, while the Greenlanders eagerly surrounded it, and one of them who spoke English advanced.

"You sabe us; we berry glad," said he, extending his hand to Frank, who had emerged from the pilot-house.

"Did you lose any of your people?" queried Frank.

"Some git hurt; none body she didn't die."

"Then you are in luck. Surround your village with a fire, and you may be sure the wolves won't come back."

The Esquimaux turned to the rest of the tribe and said something, whereupon most of them set to work upon the carcasses of the slain wolves, and cutting off what fat there was on them, they made a ridge of it around the village, and set fire to it.

As soon as the grease caught afire, and the smoke began to curl up, a terrible stench arose, but the wolves withdrew, and soon vanished behind the ice in the distance.

Our friends remained with the Esquimaux several hours, and found them to be simple, kind people, full of gratitude for the service that had been rendered them, and hospitable to the core.

The storm blew itself away before Frank and his companions took leave of the Esquimaux, and as the doctor had closely questioned them about the coast they left the village under sail with a fair idea of how the land and ice laid ahead.

"Before the fall of night they were many miles away from the *igloo* village up the coast in the vicinage of Sukker Toppen, where Frank resolved to stop for further information.

The moon arose that night, and flooded the ice with a dazzling brilliancy as the Snow Bird came to a pause amid some ice-hills, and our friends partook of their supper.

A watch was set, Frank and Barney going on duty first, while the doctor and Pomp turned in.

They were in a beautiful spot, the icy hills forming all sorts of strange shapes, gaping caverns opening in the sides of some, beautiful cathedrals towering above pinnacled domes, and fanciful minarets rising beside great columns and pedestals.

Enchanted at the sparkling and glittering beauty of the crystal formations, Frank left Barney blinking in the pilot house, and walked away to the prettiest grottoes to inspect them at closer range.

The first one he came to had a large ship's anchor half imbedded in the ice before a large, dark, arched opening, a long thick chain attached to it, leading within the aperture.

With his curiosity aroused at seeing the anchor and chain there Frank strode over to it, and examined it closely.

The anchor was covered with rust, and looked as if it had lain there a long time; then he followed the chain into the hole.

It led him into a spacious, gloomy cavern containing jagged ledges, handsome galleries, and huge stalactites and stalagmites of ice, while the walls were honeycombed with thousands of holes.

He scarcely had time to note the beauty of the vast cavern, when he was startled to hear a fearful roar behind him, accompanied by the rattling of the old rusty anchor chain.

Wheeling around swiftly, to his consternation he beheld a huge walrus which had been lying beside the opening, now dragging its tremendous body across the doorway.

Frank's retreat was cut off, and he clapped his hand to his belt.

He did not have a weapon with him.

To avoid the tusks of the monster, he rushed into the cavern further.

Unfortunately he did not observe a round hole in the floor ahead of him, in which the walrus probably swam, for it was covered by a film of ice.

But the moment he stepped on it, he fell through, and in an instant his body disappeared below the water.

CHAPTER VII.

DESPERATE ENCOUNTER WITH A WALRUS.

FRANK sank down under the water so suddenly that he was taken by surprise, and did not fairly comprehend what had happened to him until he arose to the surface again.

Then he caught hold of the edge of the circular opening in the floor of the cavern, and glanced over at the doorway.

The huge walrus yet laid across the opening, but as he was watching it the roaring monster began to drag its great body over toward Frank, and again he heard the clanking of the heavy rusty chain attached to the anchor.

A second look showed him that it was fastened around the neck of the walrus, for the moonlight streaming in at the entrance revealed every outline of the monster.

Looking out through the opening when the beast's body was out of the way, Frank saw the stationary ice boat some distance off, Barney yet in the pilot house on watch, thinking of their expected stop at Sukkertoppen.

"I'll get up out of here just as fast as possible," muttered the inventor, "for that beast looks formidable, and without a weapon to defend myself I am placed at a fearful disadvantage."

He made an effort to climb up out of the hole but slipped back into the water repeatedly; and then, to his dismay, he saw that the walrus was dragging its gigantic body over toward him by digging its long, sharp tusks into the icy floor and thus pulling itself along.

"The creature means to attack me, for it is evidently enraged at my intrusion upon its domain," flashed through Frank's mind.

There was a ferocious glare in the beast's round eyes, and it uttered a hoarse, bellowing roar that echoed like thunder in the cavern.

Frank was surprised to see it open an attack, for usually these huge creatures are docile and timid unless attacked first; but the cause soon became apparent when he heard a splash in the opening behind him, and glancing back he saw a young walrus in the water.

It then became apparent that this creature was a female, and feared for the safety of its clumsy offspring.

Seeing that the little one, which had just arisen to the surface, was bent upon getting out on the ice, Frank waited until it had emerged, and then catching hold of its flipper, he helped himself out.

But the contact of his hand made the young one bellow and struggle in frantic fear to get away, upon hearing and seeing which the big beast's rage became something frightful to witness.

It came rapidly forward with a half hop and glide, striking out savagely on either side with its tusks at imaginary enemies, the muttering thunder of its roars resounding with deafening intonations all around.

Frank's fur clothing aided him in regaining his feet, and as the suit was made of waterproof seal-skin, the brine did not penetrate it.

Once upon his feet, he ran around the opening, putting it between the walrus and himself, the water freezing on his clothing.

Then he glanced at the walrus again. It had reached its cub and paused.

A second glance gave Frank a start of surprise.

The chain that was fastened to the anchor was securely padlocked around the neck of the walrus, he now observed.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, in astonishment, "that is queer. Some sailors have been here before me and done this. But why did they secure the beast here, like a dog to its kennel?"

There was some mystery about the matter evidently, but Frank could not fathom it then, for he was anxious to get out of the cavern.

Only one exit was to be seen, and that was the one at which the walrus was chained to the big, rusty ship anchor.

He kept his glance fixed upon the walrus, and saw it butt its young one back to the aperture, in which it doubtless fed on the shrimps, fish, small seals, and such vegetable diet as the sea afforded thereabouts.

It fell clumsily into the water with its cub, and left the young one to sink in the protecting brine, while it swam toward Frank.

The exit was left unprotected now, and Frank made a rush for it.

Before he reached it, he tripped over the long chain and fell down.

An instant afterwards there came a crash in the opening, and a big block of ice became detached, and fell down into the aperture, choking it up so that Frank would have had a diffi-

cult climb before he could have reached the top and got over it.

He laid stunned by the shock of his fall for an instant, and then scrambled to his feet, only to find the walrus within a few yards of him, and advancing with its ivories raised to strike.

Darting to one side, he found himself in a corner, and broke off an enormous icicle, fully two yards in length and six inches thick.

It was well he secured it, for the walrus slipped toward him so fast that he was cornered, and would now have to fight for his life.

Frank felt nervous, but watching his opportunity, as the beast flung up its ugly head to vent another of its roars, he jammed the long icicle into its mouth, and down its throat.

A fearful wound was given to the beast, but with a toss of its head, it tore Frank's improvised weapon away, broke it in fragments, and while its flippers and tail were beating the floor with agony, it made another plunge forward.

Before Frank could leap out of the corner he was in, the beast was so close up to him that its ivory muzzle-bristles touched him.

"Good heavens, I am lost!" he groaned aloud.

"Ther deuce yuz are!" shouted Barney, making Frank start.

The Irishman sat up on the ice block in the entrance, with a rifle at his shoulder, and he had scarcely spoken, when—

Bang! went his weapon.

"Shot!" shouted Frank, as the walrus recoiled.

"Musha, my Loord, but its name is mud now! Whoop!" yelled Barney, as with a flying leap he came down in the cavern.

"Give it another!" cried Frank, darting out of the corner.

"Watch me knock an eye out av ther baste! Hurroo!"

Again the spiteful crack of Barney's rifle pealed out, and the wounded walrus recognizing the Irishman as a worse foe than Frank, it turned upon him, and sent Mr. Shea scampering away.

That gave Frank an opportunity of getting across the grotto, and as the third shot from Barney's rifle sounded, the walrus fell over.

"I think you must have killed it!" exclaimed Frank.

"Bully fer me! Faith I'm ther wondher at ther wurrlid wid ther sharpness av me soight, an' ther schtiddyness av me arrum," said Barney with a grin. "Och, whoy didn't I toy wid it be pullin' its teeth wid me hands whoile it wuz livin'? There never wuz a baste I yet feared."

He approached the prostrate walrus, and caught hold of its magnificent tusks, when it gave its head a sudden wrench, and sent Barney sprawling.

"Murder!" howled the startled Irishman.

"I'm stabbed ter ther heart!"

"Look out, it's after you!" laughed Frank,

who saw that the last spasmodic movement of the creature was the end of its vitality.

"Oh! Save me loife! Back, ye rapsallion, back I say!" yelled Barney as he dropped his rifle, and made a bee line for the door.

With one tremendous spring he caught hold of the top of the block of ice that barred the passage, and pulled himself up.

Frank picked up his rifle, and fired a ball into the creature's brain ending its life on the spot, and so frightening Barney that the Irishman toppled over backward, before he saw what happened, and fell to the ground outside, groaning and yelling for help.

By the time Frank got out of the cavern, he found Barney sitting on the ice with a sheepish look upon his face, where he fell.

"Devoured?" he asked, with a hearty laugh.

"Devoured wid shame, sor," admitted Barney.

"You ought to be. The beast is dead."

"Heaven rist its sowl, I knowed I kilt it."

"You didn't; I did. If you knew you killed it, what have you got to be ashamed of, you old deceiver?"

"Faix, I have no more ter say; it's completely stumped I am!"

"Then come on back to the Snow Bird."

"Did you chain up ther crather?" asked Barney, arising.

"No, I found it so. Somebody else did it years ago."

"Och, but how d'yer know it wor years ago, may I ask?"

"The chain end padlocked around its neck, was deeply imbedded in its flesh. Consequently it must have been put on when the walrus

was young and its neck was smaller. Growing steadily, until it reached its present increased size, the chain collar became overlapped by its flesh."

"Begorra, it's ther dacent raisinin' that is, fer I noticed it meself."

They returned to the ice boat, went on board, and sat up debating the subject until Dr. Vanyke and Pomp relieved them of their watch.

Then they turned in.

Along toward daylight Frank and Barney were aroused by the sounds of a fearful tornado sweeping over the boat, and by hearing the most dreadful reports shaking the floe as if by an earthquake.

The terrified voices of the old scientist and the coon calling them were heard, and they hastily arose and rushed into the pilot-house.

A fearful scene met their startled glances.

There was a tornado raging, hailstones as big as walnuts raining down upon the boat, while the terrible shrieking wind was driving down clouds of snow that obscured everything from view.

All over the ice was splitting in fragments, and the wind was dashing the great cakes off through the broad "leads" in the floes, driving them fiercely along to the northward.

Frank had hardly observed the storm, when with a thunderous crack that fairly made his head swim, the ice upon which the boat stood became detached and was driven away on the water.

The Snow Bird was carried off on the big cake, but the wind caught her, nearly flung her over, and began to drive her to the edge.

"All hands come outside and anchor her!" shouted Frank. "If we don't fasten the boat to the ice it will be driven into the water, and smashed to pieces among those broken fragments of the floe!"

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER TWO DAYS TEMPEST-TOSSED.

"ALL hands stand by, for death stares us in the face!"

This thrilling cry pealed from Frank's lips, two days later, for the cake of ice upon which the boat was fastened with ropes was carried up on the crest of a breaker upon an icy shore.

They had been two days of terror, tossed at the mercy of the tempest as they were, in the midst of the blinding snow-storm, colliding with bergs and floes, until the block they were on was ground and broken off along the edges so that its size was diminished one half.

Up into the air shot the cracked and broken cake bearing the ice-boat, as a raft does the shipwrecked mariner.

The loud and furious roaring of the whiteline of surf that tossed and curled in on the bleak, frozen shore of the far north Greenland coast, mingled with the fierce screaming of the wind in a terrible concert.

Only for a moment the cake of ice was poised and trembled on the crest of the breakers, and then with a forward impulse that hurled boat and floe through the air like a cannon ball, the surf let them go and recoiled with a gurgling rush.

A fearful shock followed. Into a thousand particles the cake was shivered.

Among the shattered remains fell the ice boat.

Strong as the spring bearings of the runner steels were, they almost broke from the violence of the blow.

Yet they saved the boat from utter destruction, for they gave away under the pressure, caused the body of the boat to rebound, and lessened the force of the shock to a great degree.

The four inmates of the boat felt as if the soles of their feet received a frightful blow that sent a tingling sensation coursing up through every nerve in their bodies and half stunned them.

Glasses were broken and came jingling down, crockery was cracked and demolished, and everything that received the brunt of the collision went to pieces, as if a trip-hammer struck the boat.

For an instant everything was in confusion.

The boat had been pitched upon an icy, cold shore, and she might have glided back, down the shelving embankment into the sea again, had not the wind caught it and swept it out of the demolished ice and carried it over the frozen embankment sidewise.

By that time Frank partly recovered his faculties.

Although yet scarcely knowing what he was

doing, he instinctively clutched the wheel and put an electric current in the spiked water wheels, and steered the boat up out of reach of the waves.

There was not much ice near where the water beat, but enough for the runners to pass over, aided by the wheels, and in a few moments the boat dragged itself up on level ground.

Then Frank saw an icy plain stretching many miles inland toward some rugged, towering mountains, and the boat went rushing away to the eastward away ere she paused.

Anxiously the four men glanced at each other.

"Where are we?"

It was Frank who asked this hopeless question.

Not one of them knew.

"Is any one injured?" queried the doctor.

Beyond the fearful shock, they all professed to be all right.

Each one had recovered himself by this time.

"Am de boat O. K.?" interrogated Pomp, glancing around dolefully.

None of her frame or running gear was broken.

But everything else was that such a shock could demolish.

"Glory be to ther Vargin! We're off av ther say, out av ther storm, an' on land!"

Barney's devout relief was shared by the rest.

They never before had been in such misery as when afloat on the ice.

When they fairly recovered themselves, each one was assigned to examine a certain part of the Snow Bird, and then they met to confer.

"The machinery, wheels, runners and frame are unbroken," the doctor reported, "but her steel springs and braces saved her."

"So am de masts, bowsprit, sails, an' de riggin'" announced Pomp, gleefully, "but de sticks am sprung a little, the main boom am cracked on de end, an' jumped out at de froat."

"Faix, that's aisy fixed," said Barney, "but bejabbers we can't get new dishes, cups and saucers, so we can't, nor would we have a windy pane in ther hull deck-house, if it wuzn't fer ther extra loights av glass we brung, padded up wid schtraw. Ther deck-house is cracked in a dozen places, be ther same token, an' be dadd it's a windy house we'll have, an' frozen noses an' toes if it ain't patched at wanst."

"All of the damages you have noted amount to nothing by comparison with what I have just seen," said Frank, gloomily.

The three started, and glanced at him in unconcealed alarm.

"You look dejected, Frank, and speak despondingly," said Vaneyke.

"I never despair without just reason, doctor."

"Pray, end our suspense by informing us at once of the worst."

"We are lost in a strange land!"

"Lost?" echoed the rest, aghast.

"Lost!"

"How do you mean?"

"The compass is totally destroyed."

"Have we only one?"

"Unluckily, that was all I brought."

"But the quadrant and sextant?"

"Also are ruined, and unfit for use."

"Then we cannot tell where we are."

"No! We might just as well be lost on the sea."

A blank silence followed this announcement. Their souls were filled with gloomy forebodings over the situation.

"Couldn't we follow the shore to the southward?" asked the doctor.

"Not very easily on account of the rocks, mountains, precipices, rivers, canyons, and glaciers that obstruct the way," replied Frank, shaking his head.

"Then what do you suggest as the best course for us to pursue?"

"Let us travel to the eastward. There must be Esquimaux who can direct us."

"Well, I suppose that is the best plan, as there is smooth ice, frozen snow and a more cheerful prospect in that direction than upon the coast."

"It is evident enough that we are yet in Greenland," said Frank, "but without instruments to guide us over this strange, unexplored island, it would be folly for us to attempt now to go in search of the two lost French balloonists, St. Malo and Beauvais of Brest."

"Absolutely so," assented the doctor emphatically. "Let us consider ourselves lucky to be safely ashore. I shall never forget the appalling danger we passed through, riding on that cake of ice in the midst of the snow storm, colliding

with every obstruction against which the wind hurled it. Piece by piece I anxiously watched breaking from it, gradually diminishing the size of our float, until it was eaten into, broken, and ground to such a small compass that the wonder is it did not sink beneath the weight of this boat. Then, the relief of our landing! oh, I cannot express my joy!"

Frank started the ice boat ahead, for the snow ceased falling by that time.

Barney and Pomp set to work with a vim, and in a short space of time new window panes were put in, the upset articles were put in place, order was restored, and damages were repaired.

The heat from the electric radiators diffused a genial comfort about the interior again, and a rousing good supper Pomp prepared was eaten with a relish they had not experienced in many anxious hours past.

As fleet as a bird the ice boat sped along in the moonlight towards the distant mountain peaks, Frank skillfully avoiding the hills and hummocks that arose in their path, skirting ravines, crossing frozen rivers, and losing track of all vegetation.

The air was fearfully cold, but as the thermometer bulb was broken, they had no means of ascertaining its degree.

In places the boat shot over the crackling surface of frozen snow drifts dozens of feet deep, which would have buried them had the boat broken through, while in either expanses she ran free—deep in the same element as soft as elder down, flung up a spray of feathery flakes and left a broad track behind.

In due course she reached the foot hills of the mountains, and going around a rocky spur, to branch off into the valley Frank had seen, she suddenly came upon a frozen lake, upon the borders of which they descried an igloo village that was hailed with delight.

"We can question the Esquimaux now," said Frank, "and once they post us as to the direction we are to take, we are safe to get back to Upernivik, where we can procure a compass and other instruments."

Long before they reached the village, the natives saw them, and swarmed out of their snow huts to greet them.

Dr. Vaneyke had mastered a smattering of the Esquimaux language and felt confident that he could manage a brief conversation.

The adventurers were struck by the fact that the natives did not evince any surprise at the strange boat and its passengers, and were sullen and undemonstrative to a singular degree.

When the Snow-Bird came to a pause, the chief of the tribe drew near and accosted the doctor, who had gone out on deck, in his own tongue.

A brief dialogue followed, in this manner translated:

Esquimaux—"Whence come you, strange white man?"

Vaneyke—"We were wrecked upon the shore."

Esquimaux—"And where are you going?"

Vaneyke—"To Upernivik. Tell me where it is?"

Esquimaux—"In that direction, two days travel." (pointing.)

Vaneyke—"Ah! That must be the north. We are not yet up to it?"

Esquimaux—"You have many hours travel yet, to reach it."

Vaneyke—"Can I give you anything for your information?"

Esquimaux—"Nothing. Good-bye!"

The doctor could not help noticing how oddly the chief as well as all the rest of the tribe acted, and saluting the savage, he entered the pilot house, and told the others what was said.

"It is queer they act so," said Frank. "And stranger still that they refused your offer of something for their news, as they are an avaricious set, who think a barrel of flour a veritable gold mine."

The doctor pointed out over the lake, whereon in different places they saw a number of furred men, with spears in their hands, standing over seal blow-holes, patiently waiting to lance their prey.

"That looks as if they had an abundance of food here," said he.

"Shall we remain and question them further to-morrow?"

"By all means. See—every one has retreated into his igloo."

"A few are peeping out of their entrances at us though," said Frank.

They did not discuss the matter much longer,

for Frank and Barney left Vaneyke and Pomp on watch and turned in.

Before doing so, however, they took the precaution to draw the steel shutters down over the windows to guard against any treachery.

Several hours passed by, the coon and the doctor engaging in a game of cards in the pilot-house to pass away the tedious time.

Unfortunately the rear door of the deck-house was left unlocked, and the doctor and his companion were so deeply interested in their game that they did not see it softly opened to admit a man's figure.

He looked like an Esquimaux, but he was a white man, attired in the garb worn by the Greenland Indians, and he clutched a steel knife in his hand, as he crept silently into the sleeping apartment.

The arc lights were dimly burning, and the card players' backs were turned toward the quiet skulker as he arose from his hands and knees and bent over the sleeping Frank's bunk.

He held aloft the gleaming blade to plunge it in the sleeper's heart.

Frank suddenly awoke, instinctively alarmed at the impending danger.

One glance he cast upward, and then he saw the tragic scene.

Starting up on his elbow, he pointed at the man, and cried excitedly:

"Simon Grimm, by heavens!"

"Die!" hissed the English sailor.

And down flashed the knife toward Frank's breast.

CHAPTER IX.

LOST IN THE LAND OF CRIMSON SNOW.

BIFF!

"Oh, my God!"

Bang!

"Stop, for mercy's sake!"

Thump!

"Begob, I've kicked him clane troo his hat!"

"Collar the beggar, Barney! He is my old enemy!"

"Oh, oh, oh! Spare me! I ain't a-doin' nothink!" yelled Simon Grimm.

"Faix, ye'd a stabbed Masther Frank if I hadn't slept wid wan oye open."

"I tell yer—"

"If me biff hadn't a-knocked yer descindin' knife out av yer han', if me bang hadn't a-caught yer in ther jure, an' if ther thump av me toe agin ther tail av yer coat hadn't lifted yer away, begorra, it's yer sowl as wud be owned by ther divil for murder!" angrily cried Barney.

Frank jumped out of his bunk while the irate Irishman was kicking a tattoo all over the shrinking person of the rascal, and the doctor and coon came running in, alarmed at the disturbance.

A solitary glance revealed the situation to them.

Simon Grimm made a desperate rush for the open door, but ere he could get away out shot Frank's foot, tripping him up.

He fell to the floor with a noisy crash.

"You assassin!" cried Frank, wrathfully, as he pounced upon him and got astride of his body; "so this is the way you avenge yourself—stealing in on us while we helplessly sleep, and try to commit murder of the foulest kind? Oh, I could strangle you for your infamy!"

"Le' me go!" roared the sailor, violently struggling to get free.

"Hang de villain!" exclaimed Pomp, with a howl, as he got a kick on the shins from one of Grimm's flying feet, and hopped up in the air on one leg. "Golly! look out wha' yo's doin' dar!"

"Did he cut you, Frank?" asked the doctor, anxiously.

"Came pretty near splitting my heart in two. Only for Barney I—"

"Le' go o' me, I tell yer!" raved the exposed rascal, struggling harder.

"Keep still, if you value your life!" cried Frank, pantingly, as he held the fellow down.

"Barney, give me a piece of rope—quick!"

In an instant the Irishman had it, and bent over Grimm, saying:

"Let me tie it around ther troat av him, an' I'll doy happy."

"No! Fasten his wrists and ankles," said Frank.

"More's ther pity, bedad! Shure, I niver wanted ter be a hangman till now," said Barney, dexterously securing the swearing wretch.

"What are you going to do with the fiend?" queried the doctor, who, with Pomp, was lending his aid to hold the villain down.

"Take him with us to Upernavic, and give him a trial for hanging."

"No! no! I won't go!" yelled Grimm, gnashing his teeth with fury.

"You will go, for you are my prisoner now!" quietly said Frank. "You murdered Hans Jans; you lied about me, attempted to take my life, sent the Polar Queen to her destruction, set her afire, and tried to kill her captain. The category of your misdeeds is big enough to convict you."

"How under heaven did he get away up here?" asked the doctor.

"I'll tell yer," vouchsafed Simon Grimm, with a lowering scowl and a cruel, vindictive glance at Frank. "An Esquimau brung me 'ere on 'is sledge, an' I set ther hull tribe agin yer."

"That accounts for their queer actions!" said Frank.

"Ho, ho!" chuckled the captive. "Yer seed it, eh? Remember—they 'ere coves is all my friends, an' I'll rescue me afore day's dawn."

"Not much!" exclaimed Frank. "We will fight them if necessary!"

Grimm began to yell something in the Esquimaux tongue.

"Look out! Gag him!" cried the doctor in startled tones. "He is shouting to the chief of the tribe, 'Koodloo, save me!' and the savages may attack us at any moment!"

"Then secure the doors and windows, and arm yourselves!" cried Frank, binding a towel over Grimm's mouth, and stifling his cries.

The others sprang to obey Frank's command.

They were none too soon, for just then the Esquimaux, attracted by Grimm's cries, came running from their huts toward the boat.

They climbed up on it, and made every effort to get in at the navigators without success, and then retreating, they began to pelt the Snow Bird with weapons and chunks of ice.

A loud rattling of the missiles against the boat warned Frank that the fire was getting fast and furious.

"If they find we can easily withstand such a weak fusillade as that without injury," said Frank, "they may resort to severer methods. I don't know with what lies Grimm warped their minds against us, but it is evident that they will give us much trouble if we fail to either stop them or else escape."

"Don't shoot any of the poor wretches," pityingly said the doctor.

"Very well, we will fly from them then."

"Surely that is the easiest and best plan."

"Off we go for Upernavic then," said Frank, cheerily.

He started the wheels, and away sped the boat under bare poles so fast that the village was soon left far behind.

"Faix, it's harnessin' packs av dogs ter sledges they bes doin'," said Barney, glancing back. "Ther pug-nosed fat aitters manes ter folly us."

"Reckon dey won't kotch up berry soon, chile," laughed Pomp.

Away dashed several of the Esquimaux sledges, each one drawn by a dozen shaggy dogs, looking like wolves, and each "team" led by an old, well-trained dog, to which the drivers directed most of their cries.

The Esquimaux were armed with long-lashed, short-handled whips, with which they managed their beasts, a detourous flick of the snapper easily taking a sliver of flesh and skin out of any dog aimed at.

One of the Esquimaux drivers hit an off-side dog, which immediately turned upon the nearest dog, a fight ensued, the rest piled on, and the sledge was upset, while the driver tried to separate the combatants.

Dogs and men were no friends, the latter starving and mercilessly beating the brutes when they became refractory, so no sympathy was lost.

The ice boat soon outstripped its pursuers going through the valley, and finally our friends lost sight of them entirely in the far distance.

"They are gone," exclaimed Frank, looking back. "Now, boys, get up all sail, and I will shut power off from the wheels. We will travel on for two days near the coast, and once we reach Upernavic, we will stop there, replace our nautical instruments and then continue our journey in search of the two lost balloonists further to the northward."

Nothing transpired during the following two days.

The boat sped along swiftly when she had clear ground, and kept getting further and further into a wild region.

It was impossible to get near the coast, owing to the rugged nature of the country, and they met more frequently with snow storms.

At the end of the second day it was impossible to go any further, for a snow storm had set in and they came to a pause.

They were many miles from the coast, and were so turned around that they did not know now in which direction it laid.

The perpetual Arctic night had set in upon them suddenly, and to their intense amazement, they discovered that the surrounding snow was of a strange crimson tint, such as crowns the Alpine Mountains.

As soon as this discovery was made Frank turned deathly pale.

"Doctor," said he, in tones of distress, "do you know the meaning of that snow?"

"Crimson snow can only be encountered in very northerly latitudes, Frank."

"Then we are further north than we imagined."

"How can that be?"

"I am convinced that the Esquimaux deceived us."

"Ah, terrible! Can it be?"

Simon Grimm may have induced him to lead us astray so that we might perish. Barney, bring him in the pilot house here till we question him."

"Faith, ther spalpeen's been moighty schaired this lasht two days, sor."

"What aroused his agitation, Barney?"

"Now how am I ter know whin it's niver a worrud I'd be after lettin' ther blackguard say whiniver I ungagged him ter give him his meals."

"Has he been trying to tell you anything?" asked Frank, quickly.

"He has that," responded Barney, with a grin, "but ivery toime he opened his mouth ter spake shure I jabbed somethin' in it ter choke him off unless he wanted ter ait. So it's niver a worrud he's uttered since we tuck him, fer as soon as his belly wor full I clapped ther gag over his gob again."

And with this piece of information which Barney thought was a cute thing to do, he went into the next room and brought Grimm back.

It would have been far better for them had Barney let the man speak as he wished to.

The Englishman's red beard had begun to grow again.

His eyes were wild, his face pale and haggard, and he was very nervous.

Casting a quick glance out the window he reeled back as soon as he saw the red snow, and uttered a deep groan of intense anguish.

"Oh," he muttered, hollowly, "if I 'ad known as I wuz ter be brung along wi' yes I wouldn't 'ave 'ad the Esquimaux tell ye that lie!"

"We are far from Upernavic, ain't we?" breathlessly demanded Frank.

They waited in suspense for the treacherous rascal's answer.

He essayed to speak, choked with the effort, but finally gasped:

"Ay, ay, hundreds of miles north o' it, and in a region where white men were never known ter penetrate. The Esquimaux deceived yer. Fer the las' two days I've been tryin' ter tell ther Irishman ter turn back, but he wouldn't let me speak."

"You incited Koodloo to do it to lose us here out of revenge?" asked Frank, noticing how Barney's jaw dropped upon learning what a mistake he had made.

"I won't deny it. But I'm as bad off as ther rest o' yer, I'm sorry ter see."

"Blame yourself for our peril. And now go! It is our turn for vengeance."

"What! Would yer cast me adrift here?" fairly yelled the terrified man.

"You had no mercy upon us. I will have none on you. Go, I say!"

Frank opened the door, pointed out sternly and with a groan the wretch slunk out of it in the storm.

"If I lives an' we meets again beware o' me!" he cried, pale with fear.

He shook his clenched fist in the air over his head, cast a baleful glance at the four men whom he had lured into that death-trap, strode away and vanished.

The four points of the compass were lost to our friends, they knew not whither to go for safety, and a thousand perils menaced them on all sides.

"Treacherous man!" said Frank, bitterly.

"He fell into his own trap. We have executed a just punishment upon him by sending him forth, for by his perfidy we are lost in this land of crimson snow."

CHAPTER X.

GETTING A SHOT AT A REINDEER.

"FRANK, we are lost worse than ever now. The last two days' travel were useless."

"I know it, doctor, and if this snow storm continues we may get buried."

"We will have to look out that the scurvy don't break out among us, Frank."

"True, true, for our fresh meat and vegetables are most all gone, doctor."

"Have you any idea of our whereabouts now, since we left Simon Grimm?"

"With no stars to guide us, our compass gone, no landmarks, nothing but this perpetual Arctic night and the endless snow storms, how can I tell? We have been running at random with the storm. We must be going northward all the time. The constantly increasing cold proves it. But we cannot get away from the storm, and now we are snowbound."

"Horrible! horrible! How long must the ice-boat lie here in the protecting shadow of this steep cliff before the ice melts? Perhaps we will die of starvation before that time comes. Confound Simon Grimm! If the wretch hadn't put a lie in the mouth of the Esquimaux, who told us we could find Upernavic in this region, we might not have been in our present trouble."

Frank and Dr. Vaneyke gazed gloomily out of the pilot-house windows upon the bleak, desolate scene of crimson tint ahead.

The ice-boat laid sheltered in a clear spot at the base of a towering cliff in a mountainous region far up in the north central part of Greenland, unable to move about in the storm.

It was utterly impossible for the unfortunate four to tell exactly where they were, for no observation could be taken in the endless gloom of night which enveloped that part of the earth.

Frank felt very much down-hearted, despite his indomitable courage, for with their food supply running dangerously low, no chance to hunt for game in prospect and utter ignorance of their whereabouts, it seemed as if their case was a hopeless one.

It was raw and cold out of doors to such a degree that double the usual amount of clothing was necessary to prevent them from freezing and getting frost-bitten when they ventured out of the boat.

Still the electric heat, added to the arrangement of inside padding of the boat, made the interior nice, warm and cozy.

The two men were right in the midst of their gloom, when they were suddenly turned from their unhappy reflections by hearing Pomp thumping a banjo and Barney scraping away at his old fiddle, back in the kitchen, a rattling melody full of life and spirit pealing out.

It cheered Frank and the doctor up wonderfully, and they glanced at each other, faint smiles coming over their anxious faces, and Frank remarked:

"They, at least, are light hearted, happy and gay in the midst of our despair! Have they got more courage than we have, Vaneyke?"

"It seems so," confessed the old scientist. "At any rate, if we emulate their example we will do more to help ourselves than by moping."

"Stop dat!" roared Pomp just then, interrupting them.

"What ther divil d'yer mane, yer gorilla?" chuckled Barney's voice.

"Yo' am jabbin' de end ob yo' fiddle stick in my eye, chile! G'way!"

"Am I now?" replied Barney in tones of feigned surprise, as he scraped away.

"Spec yo' knowed it afore, honey," said Pomp, keeping time to his banjo with his heel.

"Ouch!" yelled Barney, a moment later. "Ye have welted me on me corn wid yer big plantation! Sufferin' jim-jams, let me hit yez wid an ax!"

He dropped his fiddle with a clatter, and nursed his injured foot tenderly.

"Did I now?" blandly queried Pomp, with a very sober look of interested surprise, as he kept on plunking the strings and kicking time.

"Ye knowed it!" raved Barney, with a scowl.

Then Pomp roared with laughter.

It was so infectious that Barney had to laugh too.

"Hoss an' hoss, chile," grinned the coon.

"Cry quits."

"Begorra, it's aven up we are," replied Barney, restored to good nature.

"Sing us a song, Barney—yo's a scrumptious warbler."

"Be heavens, I belave yer," modestly replied the Irishman with a faint pretense of blushing, as he coughed behind his hand. "Listen ter this."

And he began to roar to an Irish refrain, Pomp accompanying.

"Sure a nate little widdy, wuz my darlint. Biddy, I courted her stiddy, swate leathers I wrote. Fair she hadn't much money, her timber wuz sunny, An' what wuz rale funny, she had a pet goat. A big Nanny goat, wid a beard, and whoite coat, A bucker, a foighter, a tough Nanny goat! Well, I called wan cold noight, in a terrible fright, Fer ter gain ther swate roight ter call Biddy me wofe, An' I opened her dure, whin I saw on ther dure Ther corpse av her goat, which wuz schtuck wid a knofe. A big carvin'-knofe, that tuck Nanny's loife, A daisy, a dandy, a sharp carvin'-knife!"

The bango tinkled a bright interlude, and Barney coughed, and went on:

"Arrah Biddy wuz weepin', and in I wuz peepin' Me desh it kep' creepin', whin clane up me nose Flew a bug wid great ease, an' I let off a sneeze That wuz dhrawn from ther nalls, at ther inds av me toes. A rip-roarin' sneeze, lolke a cyclonic breeze. A tearer, a scorcher, a head-bustlin' sneeze. Troth ther widdy's alarm, flung her plum in me arm, An' I thought it no harm, fer ter stale a schwate kiss, Then I axed her ter marry, an' she didn't tarry Ter give me, begorry, an' emphatic 'Yis!' A terrible 'Yis!' that then flloke me wid bliss, A sticky, a gummy, a francic spoke 'Yis!'"

Once more the banjo whanged out a melodious interlude, and Barney was going to cough and go on to state in the third verse how the widow, on the verge of starvation, had been compelled to kill her goat to eat it; and when they dug a hole in the cabin floor to bury it, they found her miser-husband's hoarded wealth, when he was rudely interrupted.

In the excitement of hammering at his banjo, Pomp let his hand fly up and caught Barney a thump on the mouth.

It choked the rest of the song down in Barney's throat, raised his ire, and he gave the banjo a kick that sent it up to the ceiling.

Before it came down he and Pomp were rolling on the floor trying to pulverize each other, when Frank alarmed them by shouting suddenly:

"Arm yourselves, boys, quick! Arm yourselves, and come here!"

Up jumped the combatants, considerably ruffled in looks, and forgetful of all animosity they seized their rifles and rushed into the pilot-house.

Frank had already gone out, and the doctor was preparing to follow.

The inventor had seen a magnificent reindeer struggling in the snow, and recognizing the importance of at once securing its flesh for their larder, he snatched up his rifle and ran out to get a shot at it.

Frank was warmly muffled up in seal skins, had on a mask to protect his face, with eye-holes in it, and wore gloves to protect his hands, else he could not have held the metal rifle, for it was so cold that his uncovered hands would instantly have been frozen by touching it.

The beautiful big beast, with towering antlers, had vanished in the veil of down-falling flakes when he appeared, but he saw the direction it had taken and ran after it.

Knowing enough, as it did, to keep out of the deepest drifts, the reindeer followed the shallowest course through the snow, and Frank, only knee deep in the crimson carpet, made fair progress toward the creature.

It led him on, further and further away from the boat every moment, sometimes appearing like a specter in the mist, then scenting or seeing him, taking fright and bounding away ere he could fire at it.

Made eager and anxious to capture the handsome beast, Frank forgot that the down-falling flakes were obliterating his tracks and losing the boat to his view the further away he got from it.

Presently he came to a large sheet of ice covering a lake.

The wind kept blowing the snow from its surface so that a good footing was obtained, upon which he could run ahead faster.

The graceful deer had gone bounding away over it with remarkable speed, and might have vanished forever had not Frank ran swiftly.

He came in sight of it again by following its tracks, and it stood, curving its neck, glancing back at him when he fired.

The ball wounded it, but did not kill.

Away it bounded again, leaving a trail of blood behind which was easily followed, and off

Frank ran again with renewed zeal, for he now had some encouragement and hope of getting it.

On, on, on he went, and when again he came in sight of the poor creature, it had arrived at the side of the lake and plunged into a deep snow-drift, where it was wildly floundering, unable to get out.

Up Frank rushed to it, and a second shot brought the creature to its knees in a violent struggle against death.

Its tongue lolled out of the side of its mouth, a pathetic look came into its soft brown eyes, and it raised its head far back.

Once more Frank aimed and fired.

The ball crashed into its brain, and it fell dead.

Running up to the beast, he caught it by the antlers and dragged it out of the snow-drift on to the ice and bled it.

A finer buck Frank had never seen, and its steaks were bound to replenish their meager larder for a long time to come.

It was disembowled on the spot, the expert hunting-knife of the inventor doing the work with marvelous dexterity and dispatch.

He soon had it all prepared.

"And now to return to the boat with it, and — But, great Heaven!"

He paused, turned pale, glanced around at the falling snow, and then, with a frightful feeling stealing over him, he faltered:

"Where is the ice-boat?"

It was a hopeless question.

Miles away no doubt, but no track remained now to show him in which direction it stood, for the snow hid everything.

A feeling of cold, blank despair came over him, and covering his face with his hands, he sank down upon the deer he had slain.

"I am lost!" he muttered. "I may perish here!"

CHAPTER XI.

AN INVISIBLE MESSENGER FROM THE SKY.

NEITHER the doctor, Barney or Pomp followed far after Frank, for the old scientist suddenly thought how hard it would be to get back to the boat in the snow storm, as their tracks became obliterated.

"Hold on, boys! Don't go any further!" he exclaimed.

"Yo' gwine ter le' Massa Frank git lost, sah?" demanded Pomp.

"No. He won't venture too far away, as he is bound to think of it."

"Faith I'm that onaisy, shure I can't let him go alone," said Barney.

"But I tell you he may get lost. Better one than two."

"Begob yer roight there, docther dear, but where he goes I go!" said Barney.

The doctor pondered a moment.

"Perhaps after all it will be better for him to have company," said he.

"Then bedad I'm off," exclaimed the Irishman.

And away he ran, following Frank's trail.

Pomp kept glancing wistfully back toward the direction of the boat.

"Ef we done stay yere much longah, sah," said he, after awhile, "de snow cober our heads, doctah. Reckon we bettah go back to de Snow Bird, sah."

"True; it will do us no good to remain here any longer, Pomp."

"Doan' wanter leabe de boat widout a watch aboard, sah."

"Let us return, then, and we can fire off our guns occasionally, shout, and keep the electric lights burning to guide Frank and Barney back, in case they are at a loss to locate the boat."

They returned to the electric ice boat forthwith, and started the lights, but the rays failed to penetrate the dense fog of flakes very far.

In the course of an hour they began to discharge the rifles at brief intervals, the reports breaking dull and smothered on the frosty air.

"Do you notice that it is stopping snowing gradually?" asked Vaneyke.

"Clar ter glory, sah, dis chile wish it would stop altogether."

"A slight rain is falling now."

"Gwine ter wash de snow away, sah."

"No. It will freeze the upper crust as hard as ice."

"Den we kin go skatin' out ob heah on it in de boat, kain't we?"

"I hope so. Do you hear Frank yet?"

"Nary a soun'." "Specs dat he ain't come back yit, sah."

"Keep on firing, anyway. They are bound to hear the shots."

"Yessah. Heah she goes, Massa Vaneyke."

Every time they fired, they listened to hear a responding shout or shot, but none came on the dreary, whistling wind, and they grew impatient.

Then they became restless, fidgety and alarmed.

"What can be keeping them so long?" anxiously asked the doctor, walking around and around the platform surrounding the deck houses, and peering here and there in an effort to penetrate the mist.

"Hope nuffin' done happen dem, doctah," said Pomp, uneasily.

"Oh, Frank is too careful to make any mistakes."

They cheered themselves up with this comforting assurance awhile, and when the snow finally ceased altogether, the rain and hail took its place, and distant objects became clearer.

The powerful glare of the search light pierced the gloom, but the sky remained dark with the storm.

Back and forth, and to and fro paced the two impatient watchers on the slippery deck, for the falling rain froze hard the moment it touched the boat, and covered it with a glittering mantle of ice.

The top crust of the snow became as hard as iron.

Another hour passed monotonously by without the two expectant men receiving any sign of the ones they were waiting for.

Their fears now became confirmed.

"Pomp," said the doctor, pausing beside the coon, "something has happened to Frank and Barney. I am sure of it."

"Oh, doan' say dat, Massa Vaneyke," pleaded the darky.

"Can there be any other reason for their protracted absence?"

"Waal, dis chile ain't a-gwine ter fink 'bout it, no how, sah."

"The conviction grows upon me steadily. I can't help it."

"Oh, golly, why doan' dey come back, fo' de lan' sakes?"

"Go aloft with a pan full of colored fire, and keep it burning."

Pomp did so eagerly enough, and a few moments afterwards a weird red glow shot up from the foremast head, the dense smoke and vivid flame showing the darky and the top rigging plainly.

It was a signal that could have been seen a good ways off, and it burned steadily and sputtering for a quarter of an hour.

Then Pomp descended to the deck.

"Any news, doctah?" he queried.

"None yet. I'm going to send up some rockets."

He lit one, there sounded a fierce hiss, out poured a thick jet of sparks, and away up into the cold dark sky shot the blazing meteor, to a height of several hundred feet ere it burst.

At intervals of every five minutes, the doctor sent up a rocket until half a dozen had thus been used without any result.

"I am afraid the case is hopeless!" he exclaimed dejectedly.

"Wha' we'se gwine ter do now den?" blankly asked Pomp.

"Really, I am at a loss to determine, as we cannot track them."

"Den s'posen we wait till de rain stop, an' when ebery ting am froze den we kin start off de boat, an' scour aroun' fo' dem, sah."

"Pomp, that is the only plan to be followed. Heaven help them, I do sincerely hope no calamity has befallen the brave fellows."

"Amen, sah!" groaned Pomp with due solemnity.

Just then something hit the boat a violent blow.

There followed a metallic sound, then a scraping noise.

Both of the watches started, and glanced around keenly.

A loud bump succeeded the second noise, which was followed in quick succession by a series of bangs and thumps that made the boat shake from stem to stern.

A long dark object, looking very much like a rope with a grapnel fastened to the end of it hung from the air, close to the side of the cliff, as if some one let it down from up on the top of the precipice.

Vaneyke grasped Pomp's arm, and pointed at it.

"See there!" he exclaimed, excitedly. "What does that mean?"

"A rope wif a anchor on de end, sah," muttered Pomp.

"Looks as if some one was letting it down over the edge of the cliff."

"Shuah 'nough, doctah. Yo' sink it am Massa Frank, huh?"

"Very likely! How the wind sways it. Look out. It is sweeping this way!"

He pulled Pomp aside just as the rope whizzed by them, but to his amazement it did not swing back to where it came from.

Pomp sprang forward and seized the grapple, but it suddenly arose, caught in the railing on the front of the deck and the rope became taut, began to bend out at an angle, and to the utter amazement of the two men, the rope dragged the boat along.

It was pulled away from the cliff.

Out on the frozen snow, glided the ice boat, and in another moment it shot along over the frozen crest with wonderful speed.

Pomp and the doctor cried out with astonishment.

Then the truth of the matter dawned upon Vaneyke.

"This rope is hanging from a balloon?" he exclaimed, as he glanced upward, in the vain endeavor to pierce the Stygian darkness with his vision.

"Lawd amassy, it doan' hang from de cliffs?" cried Pomp.

"No. The balloon is dragging us along."

"Anchored to us, sah?"

"Assuredly, Pomp."

"Hi, dar! What a circus!" chuckled Pomp, delightedly.

"Listen! I have an inference to make."

"What am it, doctah?"

"I think this must be the French aeronauts' balloon!"

"Hey! St. Malo, an' Beaubais of Brest?"

"None else."

"Let's signal dem."

"Go ahead."

Pomp began to shout up in the air at the invisible balloon.

"Hey dar! He yelled at the top of his voice. 'Balloon, ahoy!'"

No answer came back, only the sighing of the wind, the patter of hail and rain and the grating of the runners being heard.

Again and again the darky shouted and fired off his pistol, but no answer was given, and they glanced at each other in surprise.

"It almost seems as if no one was in the balloon," said the doctor.

"Dar am only one way ter find out," replied the darky.

"You mean by climbing up the rope to look in the car?"

"Fo suah. Will I go?"

"Try it if you think you can."

"Dis coon kin shin up a greased pole like a monkey, sah."

"That icy rope is as slippery as if it was greased, Pomp."

"Den heah she go!" said the darky.

He caught hold of the stiff, icy rope and began to climb it.

But his weight lowered the balloon, the grapple unfastened itself and away darted the balloon, carrying Pomp with it clinging to the rope.

Within a minute it was lost to view in the gloom.

A startled cry burst from Dr. Vaneyke's lips, as much at the singular accident as at the position he found himself placed in.

Released by the grapple the boat had swiftly shot ahead, and ere the doctor fairly saw the danger it sped out upon an ice bridge that spanned a deep chasm.

The bridge was only formed by snow drifting across the deep rift and freezing there in a broad, compact mass.

It began to violently shake and crack with loud, deafening reports as soon as it felt the heavy weight of the boat upon it.

Alarmed, the doctor took one glance by the glare of the search-light and then dashed into the pilot-house as fast as he could go.

"I must start the machinery!" he gasped.

"If I don't instantly get the boat across the bridge it may give way and dash me down in the ravine with the boat!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE BLUE-SKINNED MEN.

BARNEY felt anxious about Frank and ran along in pursuit of him, assured that if he was with the inventor of the electric ice-boat he would certainly be able to get back in safety.

Unluckily for the Irishman's enterprise when he reached the frozen lake all of Frank's tracks were blown away, and Barney not only found

himself unable to pursue the trail any further, but he also made the discovery that he was himself lost.

"Bejabbers," said he, with a long drawn whistle, "I'm rattled completely."

Then he made a frantic effort to find his own trail to retrace his steps to the boat, but even at this attempt he signally failed.

By the time the unlucky fellow had made a circuit of that end of the lake, he was so turned around that he didn't know where he was.

He heard a strange voice on the eastern side of the ice.

It sounded like a cross between the lowing of a cow and the bleating of a sheep, and it brought him to a pause, with an interested expression.

"Faith I do be hearin' somethin' familiar!" he muttered.

Above the noise of the wind he faintly distinguished several more of the same kind of sounds accompanied by the patter of many hoofs.

"Shure it must be a drove av pigs!" ejaculated the listening Barney.

He had given up all hope of finding Frank since he lost himself, and with his interest in the strange noises aroused, he suddenly made a run in the direction the sounds came from, bent upon an investigation.

A dozen yards ahead he met with the objects of his search.

It was a drove of musk-oxen.

They are the connecting link between oxen and sheep, smaller in size than ordinary cattle and covered with a profusion of brown hair that reached to the ground about their short legs.

Their heads were large and broad, the thick horns curving downward on each side, bending upward again at the tips and proving wonderful weapons of defense against wolves and bears that attack these beasts.

They were a dozen of them in the herd, all huddled together for protection against the snow when Barney appeared.

"Be ther tail av ther Widdy Nolan's goat," gasped Barney, "if they ain't sheep grown inter cows! Faix, if this climate makes bastes grow so big, be heavens I'll be a giant when I goes back ter Readestown, so I will."

Seeing a fine prospect for musky food, he aimed at the drove, and fired a shot in their midst, dropping one of the creatures dead.

Barney expected to see the herd scatter and run, upon hearing the discharge of his gun, but instead of doing so, they followed their custom of huddling still closer together, betraying every evidence of fear, and seeming to be seeking each other's protection.

"Arrah, but it's tame they bes!" ejaculated the amazed Barney. "Shure it's a croyin' shame ter slaughter thim, whin they stand as if in the shambles. I'll catch thim alive, so I will, an' dhrove 'em back ter ther boat whin ther schnow stops. Here, Cush, Cush, Cush!" he added, advancing toward the musk-oxen, with his hand extended, snapping his fingers and kissing the air to mollify the beasts into confidence.

The timid little creatures allowed Barney to get close up to them.

Then the whole herd drew back in a line, facing him, and with one grand rush, they struck the over-confident Barney.

Butting like a battering-ram, the musk-oxen shot him backwards across the ice, skating on the broad of his back, his legs in the air, and in the stampede that followed Barney might have been crushed into a jelly had their delicate little hoofs and slight bodies been larger.

Still it was no fun to have them running over him.

"Howly bull-frogs!" yelled he. "Shtop, ye stumpy-tailed midgets! Lave wan spot av me person unthrampled! Shoo! Shoo, there, an' ther Loord 'll luv yer!"

He grabbed hold of the long hair of one of the creatures, was dragged along some distance, and finally pulled himself upon his feet.

He didn't let go his clutch on the animal, and to keep pace with it, he had to run as fast as his fur-clad legs would carry him.

Then he got a good grip on the creatures shaggy coat, made a flying-leap, and landed astride of its back.

"Erin-go-Bragh!" yelled Barney, his blood boiling with excitement as the musk-ox dashed along over the ice, thoroughly scared. "I've rid animals afore, but this is ther hairiest wan I ever straddled bedad! Git along there ye spalpeen, an' we'll bate ther pack!"

He slung his rifle over his back, dug his heels in ther beasts' sides, clutched its wool, and away he dashed with the speed of the wind, through

the whirling snow flakes, yelling at the beast to go faster.

A wry expression soon began to overspread his face though.

The animal's backbone was as sharp as a razor.

Bumped up and down upon it, Barney soon began to feel as if he was getting split in halves, despite every effort he made to remain seated firmly.

"Whoop!" he roared. "Howld on! Let me get off! I'm dividin' in two!"

But his voice caused the musk-ox to go faster, and with an agonized look upon his face, Barney was carried far from the lake upon the surface of an enormous glacier, not daring to leap from the creatures' back, for fear of breaking his head.

Most of the racing herd kept together, and mile after mile was covered in this manner until at last the creatures went plunging into a snow drift, a cloud of flakes went up in the air, and their mad race was suddenly checked by them tumbling over each other.

Over went the beast bestrode by Barney, the Irishman was shot up in the air, and in a moment a scene of intense confusion followed.

Barney came down in the crimson snow again, and was buried.

At first he thought he was falling through the earth as the snowbank was twenty feet deep, but everything was so soft and yielding around him that he was not hurt by his mad plunge.

Upon finding this out, he laid quiet, regained his faculties, and then began to dig a way to the open air again.

When he got out of the snow drift the musk oxen had all managed to get a firm footing once more, and went racing away in the snow storm again, leaving Barney there all alone.

"Where in thunder am I?" gasped Barney, wildly staring around. "Hey! Come back, ye bit av an aould young cow! Whoa, whoa! Take me wid yez!"

But the musk oxen paid no heed, and vanished.

A look of disgust settled over Barney's masked face.

"Go on wid yez, then!" he growled, seeing that he was deserted. "Who wants yez, anyway? Shure ther schmell av yez paralyzes me nose. It's nauthin' but overgrown musk-rats yez bes. I can't stand yez anny longer. I—hal!"

The latter exclamation, interrupting his apostrophe, was elicited by the sudden appearance of several sledges, each drawn by a team of white foxes.

The sledges were long, low and narrow, and each one contained two men.

Coming to a pause near Barney, he saw that the men were the most peculiar-looking individuals he ever had laid eyes on.

Of massive proportions, and clad in suits of clothes consisting of pants, boots, short skirts and tunics, their heads from the neck up were bare, save for small round skull-caps, in which each wore an upright tuft of fox tail, while their arms were bare to the shoulders.

They all had fierce features, long red hair, and strangest of everything the color of the exposed portions of their skin was blue.

Whether this came of the cold climate, or was a race color like those of Indians, negroes and Chinamen, Barney had no means of knowing.

They were all armed with shields, spears, battle-axes and arrows.

"Pagans, bejabbers!" ejaculated Barney, recoiling. "Be ther whiskers av St. Patrick I've dishcovered a new race av min, so I have!"

He was going to run away, when the man in the foremost sledge adroitly let fly the lash of his fox-whip, and it coiled around Barney's legs with a vicious snap and a painful sting.

Before the Irishman could regain his feet, the man sprang from the sledge, pounced upon him, and exhibiting a wonderful degree of strength, with one hand he caught Barney by both wrists and lifted him up.

Then he said something to him in a strange language.

Of course the Irishman could not understand him.

"Spake English or Irish," said he, "I'm no furriner!"

The man said something unintelligible again, and dragged Barney over to his sledge, upon which he roughly flung him, and mounting it himself, he yelled at the fox team, and away they dashed to the northward.

Barney laid upon the robes of skin, not knowing what to do.

He didn't know where he was, and finally concluded that the companionship of these strange men was much better than wandering alone in the storm.

There was something exhilarating in the ride that followed, for the foxes went along swifter, more orderly, and straighter than Esquimaux dogs.

Rain gave place to the snow after a while.

After the lapse of an hour, during which the sledge ran over the top of the frozen snow drifts they came to what is called a *nunatak*, or island of verdure.

They are found in elevated spots where the ice has licked in and surrounded, but not yet covered the ground, and these oases in the deserts of ice are all that the browsing animals have to depend upon for food.

The island stood out black by contrast with the surrounding crimson ice, covered with moss and lichens, dwarf birch and willow tree, and arising from the midst of it Barney saw a small city of ice houses built after an ancient Runic style.

He sighted the isolated city long before they reached it, for it was surrounded by fire towers of rude masonry upon the tops of which burned endless beacons of oil, that shed a ruddy glare about, and broke the gloom of the eight months night.

Every fire-tower had a man to watch it, and keep the blaze going, and the streets and houses swarmed with people as barbarous and blue skinned as those who held Barney a prisoner.

It was very evident that these people were descendants of the Runic Icelanders, who centuries before had landed in Greenland with Eric the Red, and founded the first settlements there.

The scene was strange and weird, and made Barney shudder for these savage pagans were more barbarous, he knew, than the Esquimaux.

Hundreds of blue skinned men, women and children crowded around the sledge, staring in evident wonder at Barney, and excitedly discussed his advent, in a deep guttural language not unlike Dutch.

The sledges paused in front of one of the ice-houses, one story in height with a globular roof and only one opening, by which they entered.

His captor was evidently the chief of the tribe, Barney saw by the rough deference the rest paid him, and he sprang up, grasped his captive, and flung him violently into the house, through the opening.

Barney was hurled to the floor so heavily that it hurt him, and he sprang to his feet in a rage, rushed at his captor, and struck him.

"Bad scan ter yer ugly mug!" he exclaimed. "Take ther weight av me fisht ter taich yer better manners. Shure I'm no pig, ter git schlammed around loike that, so I ain't, an' it's a black oye I'm afther givin' yez!"

The man uttered a fierce cry and recoiled gnashing his teeth as he received the blow in his face; then he sprang into the house, and jumped toward Barney, who thrust out his foot and tripped him up.

All the onlookers became excited and incensed against the Irishman for resenting what their leader did, and a dozen of the men rushed into the big room.

Up jumped the chief to his feet in a towering passion, his dark eyes flashing fire, and his bulky figure quivering all over.

He pulled the heavy battle-ax from his belt, the rest of his men forming in a line behind him and doing likewise.

It was evident that they meant to murder their captive.

Barney saw it, but did not flinch.

He stood near the back wall, and his opponents near the doorway, and hastily unsling his rifle from his back.

Raising it to his shoulder, he took aim at the men.

A shout pealed from the chief's lips—a cry fraught with vengeful inflections, and he raised his massive battle-ax over his head, all of his followers following his example.

Crack—bang! went Barney's rifle.

The report had scarcely pealed out, when every man let his ax fly from his hand, and the whirling blades flew through the air toward Barney in a death-dealing shower!

CHAPTER XIII.

FROZEN.

Lost and alone on the ice Frank felt very despairing, and sat for some time upon the carcass of the reindeer he killed, wondering what to do.

When the snow turned into rain, and the at-

mosphere became clearer, he imagined he might be able to locate himself, but soon discovered that it was impossible to do so.

"Inactivity will not do me any good," he concluded at last. "I must shake off this oppressive feeling of despair and be a man!"

Just then he beheld the outlines of a vast moving body approaching him that looked like the undulating swell of the sea.

It was a dark color, and made him think for a moment that the ice of the lake was melting gradually, and the water coming toward him.

But he soon heard a strange creaking sound in shrill tones emanating from the mass, and saw that it was composed of a vast army of what looked like heavily formed land rats with short tails.

"Great heavens, there are millions of them moving this way in a compact mass," muttered Frank, his eyes opening wide as he fixed his glance upon the creatures. "Now I know what they are! It's an army of migrating lemmings. The harmless little creatures are on the march back to where they came from before the approach of winter no doubt, but they look mighty gaunt and hungry to me."

Nearer and nearer they approached, and then Frank saw that they did not intend to deviate an inch, but march straight up to him.

As soon as this became evident, an idea occurred to him.

"Can they be starving for lichens, grass, catkins of birch, and mean to raid on the carcass of this deer?" he muttered.

The idea made Frank resentful.

He had such trouble to get the deer, he did not wish to have it wrested from him in such a summary manner, as it might prevent an outbreak of scurvy amongst the crew of the ice boat.

Besides, he had to pay too dear for the venison by losing himself to secure it, to let it go to waste.

Aiming his rifle at the troop, Frank fired half a dozen shots at the little creatures, but instead of checking their advance, they darted forward and swarmed all over the carcass of the deer.

To Frank's alarm they climbed all over him, too.

He beat them off, but they renewed the attack, bit into him through his seal-skins and tore his clothing to pieces with fearful avidity.

It was evident that starvation was what rendered them so desperate, and Frank, finding his hands inadequate to the task of ridding himself of the pests, flung himself upon the ice, and rolled over and over to crush them off by the weight of his body.

It was a fatal resort.

The moment he was down hundreds of them swarmed all over him.

Hardly an inch surface of the deer was to be seen on account of the tremendous horde of beasts that were now swarming all over, tearing it to pieces and raising a fearful clamor with their voices.

Frank fought like a madman to drive the lemmings away, but their sharp teeth persistently ripped and tore at his clothing, and rent it to tatters, while every few moments they bit into his flesh, causing him the most intense pain.

Within an amazing short space of time his skin was laid bare in a thousand places, the mask was torn from his face and he was getting exhausted from his violent exertions.

"If this keeps on they will kill me, tear the flesh from my bones and leave nothing but my skeleton here to tell that I ever existed!" muttered Frank desperately. "I must fly—fly for my life!"

He scrambled to his feet and ran.

Ran, he knew not nor cared not whither so long as he got away from the horde of squeaking little black cannibals that were chasing him over the ice.

He beat off those that clung to him yet, gnawing at his clothing as he ran, and finally distanced the ones in pursuit.

Small and insignificant as the animals looked, they were fearful foes because their numbers were so great, and an intense sigh of relief burst from Frank's lips when he drove them away.

Fairly exhausted, he sank down in the snow, presently, the cold rain beating mercilessly upon him, and the awful cold freezing it all over him until he was coated with ice.

He felt as if incased in a vise, his clothing became so stiff and the terrible frost now attacked him through his rent garments with a rigor that threatened destruction.

The icy chill made him shiver as it struck

through, and a sharp stinging pain assailed him wherever his skin was exposed.

All the torture he suffered was mercifully blunted though, by a dull languor that was fast stealing over him, and taking his senses.

It was a fatal sleep. But few Arctic travelers ever experienced it, and lived afterwards.

"What is it that makes me feel so sleepy?" he muttered, drowsily. "I musn't give in to it, for if I do, I'll freeze to death here!"

He made an effort to arise, but fell back helplessly.

His blood was chilled through and through; his limbs were getting numb and lifeless; his breath became stentorian; he could hardly keep his eyes open; he had an irresistible desire to sleep.

This stupid sensation got worse every moment.

Again he essayed to stagger blindly to his feet, but the effort was too much for him, and he fell prostrate this time.

Still fighting against the awful languor that was depriving him of consciousness, Frank dragged himself over to an ice hummock, got his back against it, and tried to retain a sitting posture.

All thought was fast diminishing, everything began to look blurred and spun around before his strained vision, his head sank upon his bosom, and a moment later he slept!

It was the worse thing that could have happened to him.

* * * * *

"Hello, doctor, Barney, Pomp! Where are you? I say, old fellows, I—"

But that was as far as Frank got when he came to his senses, for he found himself lying in an Esquimaux *igloo*, surrounded by a short, dumpy specimen of that tribe, his wife, and his children.

Sharp, smarting pains were shooting all over him, and he made an effort to get up, when to his surprise, he found himself packed in snow from head to foot, and felt that he did not have a stitch of clothing upon his body.

However, that was the only way in which a frozen man could be thawed out, and he found that the plan operated capitally in his own case.

Remaining quiet for some time, Frank finally felt the painful effects of returning animation gradually wearing away, until at last he was restored to his normal condition, and a grateful warmth began to pervade his body and limbs.

The fat Esquimaux and his family kept up a lively conversation in the meantime, finally dug him out, and gave him a suit of the man's clothes to put on, after which a pull at his own flask of brandy followed, and he began to feel like himself again.

"Can you speak English?" he asked of the Esquimaux.

The man shook his head and gestured, to signify that he did not understand what Frank meant.

Nor could the inventor speak the Indians' language.

He glanced around the ice hut, from the roof of which water was constantly dripping down, melted by the smoky flame of a queer lamp that illumined the interior, and observed how warm it was there.

In the middle of the floor a circular trench was excavated, and on the shelf all around it slept the Esquimaux, side by side, upon the skins that were lying there. Nothing was in the abode.

Frank arose, crept over to the door, and passed out, followed by the man who had resuscitated him, and glanced keenly around.

He was in a village of a score of huts.

The storm had passed away, and the moon shone out.

Afar in the north he saw the beautiful waves of crimson aurora borealis playing in the sky, but not a soul was visible, for all had gone into the bee-hive huts, against which their sledges were laid.

There were large numbers of their wolfish-looking dogs barking and snarling about, and in the air he beheld flocks of eider ducks and ptarmigans flapping their wings in ample security from gun shots.

"Some of these fellows speak Norwegian with the sealers," muttered Frank after walking about, to get his blood circulating healthfully again. "I'll try this fellow."

He did so, and to his joy discovered that the Esquimaux understood and spoke it.

Thereupon he thanked the man, and asked how he came to be there, to which the Esquimaux replied that he had found Frank &

w miles away freezing to death, and brought man home to revive him.

Explaining the location of the ice-boat, he asked if the man could bring him there, to which he other readily assented, and as Frank was anxious to set off at once, the Esquimaux started with him.

The brisk walk that followed entirely restored Frank's vigor, but when they reached the cliff at the base of which the boat had been, they found that the Snow Bird was gone, and left no trace behind.

Frank was overwhelmed with despair.

"What am I to do now?" he blankly asked the Esquimaux in Norwegian.

"Return to my village, and stay with us," replied the man.

"I shall do so. But I will leave a note here, apprising them where to find me in case they should come back," said Frank, taking a pencil and paper out of his pocket, and rapidly inscribing a few lines.

He left it in a conspicuous place, and started off; then he paused.

"See! There is the boat now!" he cried excitedly pointing ahead.

Clearly outlined on any icy bed in the brilliant star and moonlight he saw the boat.

Then he rushed frantically toward it, when like thin air it melted and vanished.

"My God! What is the meaning of this?" he cried hoarsely. "Was it a dream?"

"It was only a mirage," replied the Esquimaux. Deceived by a reflection of the boat upon the atmosphere, Frank had only seen its shadow. But where was the boat itself?

CHAPTER XIV.

ADrift IN THE SKY.

CLINGING to the rope of the balloon, the grapnel of which had been released from the deck railing of the ice-boat, Pomp was swept along through the rain, leaving the Snow Bird to dash ahead out upon the ice bridge spanning the ravine, which began to break beneath its weight.

The darky had a tenacious grip on the ice coated rope, and a thrill of terror passed over him upon finding that it had broken free from the ice-boat, and that the balloon was carrying him away.

Moreover, the globe had arisen on the strong wind, lifting the darky so high from the icy ground that he was afraid to let go and drop.

So he climbed up the swaying drag-rope.

"If St. Malo, an' Beauvais of Brest am in de car ob de balloon," he muttered, "it am mighty queer dat dey didn't ansawah when I done gib dem a hail. Reckon I'll go up dar. Might slip off yere, an' crack all ter pieces on de ice below if my han's slips off."

Pomp had often navigated the air with Frank, and was not alarmed much over his present position; besides, he could climb like a monkey, as he boasted to Dr. Vaneyke, and went up the rope at an astonishing rate of speed until he reached the car.

It was a tremendous square wicker work basket, with steel frame work insuring it absolute rigidity, and was closed over, and made impermeable to water, like a boat. On each side were small wings.

There was a door at the side, and Pomp pushed it open and entered.

The interior was padded, he saw by a burning lamp, and was fitted up with two hammocks, a light table, camp stools, photographic apparatus, other scientific and optical instruments, arms and utensils, a canoe, sledge, ropes, motor, and an oil stove, while the doors that opened into the wings probably gave access to storage room for provisions, water, and so forth.

In the hammocks laid two men.

Pomp stepped to their side, and saw that they were both very pale and cold, but were alive, as they were breathing laboriously.

He instantly set about to restore them to their senses, and soon succeeded in getting them aroused from a stupor they had been in.

Both of the men were attired in heavy gray woolen traveling costumes, had their faces shaved clean, their hair cut short, and were evidently men of no common order, to judge by their appearance.

One was slender, with clear cut, classical features, and the other darker, heavier built, and had rounder and more somber outlines of face.

They both evinced the utmost amazement to see Pomp when they revived.

"Come dar, now, wake up—wake up!" yelled the coon.

"Monsieur," began the light complexioned man in French.

"G'wan!" interposed Pomp. "Dis chile don't polly voo, nohow, St. Malo."

"St. Malo! *Parbleu!* You know me?" cried the man in amazement.

"Why, certainly," chuckled Pomp. "An' dat gemman am Beauvais ob Brest!"

"*Sacre tonnerre!* Here ees wong meestery to me, Monsieur."

"Am it? Lawks amighty, 'tain't nuffin' ob de kine ter dis chile."

"Ees ze balloon to ze ground?"

"Sakes alibe, no. We am afloatin' in de sky, sah."

"Zen how you deed geet here?"

"Clum up de rope."

"Ah! *Par dieu!* Zat ees ver strange! Explain, Monsieur, explain."

"Dar am not much ter tole yer, honey. We've been alookin' fo' yer fer some time pas', an' bres de lamb we've foun' yo' at las'."

"Pardong—you say 've'—who eez 've', may I inquir'?"

"Frank Reade, Jr., an—"

"Ah! Zat eez enough! I now do undairstang all. Renaud, ze prefect of ze police of ze Paris deed send Meestair Reade up here, eh?"

"Axed im ter do it, an' we 'bliged," assented Pomp. "But I'll tell yo' all de res' when yo' gib us yo' yarn. Wha' ailed yo' a minute ago, sah?"

"Ah, such a terreble time ve deed 'ave, Monsieur. Up in ze sky we was shoot so 'igh by ze fearful wind—currents zat sweep ova'ir ze north pole zat we sink ve nevair come down again, an' lose all control ova'ir ze balloon. Zen we can hardly breathe up zere, an' we lose our senses. Zat eez how you deed find us zis vay, Monsieur."

"How war it youse didn't cross ober de norf pole?" asked Pomp.

"Monsieur, eet eez ova'ir one month ago zat ve left Spitzbergen to attemp' eet."

"Hab yo'se been up in de air all dis time?"

"Eva'iry hour, fighting against ze head an' ze cross winds."

"De win's obercome yo', and drike yo' ober on Greenlan' den?"

"Oui, oui. But, *parbleu*, ve vas ova'ir ze centair of ze pole."

"Bully fo' yo'!"

"Eh! Vat eez zat 'bully', monsieur, I not do compron'?"

"Oh, we Yankee's hab dem kine of expressions, dat's all."

"Ah, pardong me. But where is Monsieur Reade?"

Pomp thereupon told him all that occurred to them from the time poor Hans Jans arrived in Readestown, up to the present moment, to all of which he attentively listened.

Beauvais of Brest did not understand English, so he paid no attention to their conversation, but busied himself examining the balloon, took observations, and posted himself generally.

He was a quiet, uncommunicative man, and knew that his friend would explain everything to him in due time.

The balloon was in a strong current of wind flowing from the southwest, and rode about two hundred feet above the ice, the long drag-rope balancing and steadying its motions.

Above them the darkness was yet too great to give pomp a view of the balloon, but the rain had ceased to fall, the clouds were dispersing and the moon and stars were struggling to burst out.

By the time Pomp finished his recital the earth was flooded with the mellow silvery light of the heavenly bodies, and the crimson snow glittered, sparkled and flashed with a thousand beautiful tints almost outrivaling the aurora.

Beauvais of Brest had gone up on a circular, railed-in little platform under the balloon to which the net cords were tied, and he now came into the car, and said something in French.

St. Malo's face changed, he sprang to his feet and exclaimed:

"Monsieur, excuse me, I must go out and see."

"See what?" demanded Pomp, in surprise.

"Ze vat you call a conflagration."

Pomp was mystified, but before he could get any explanation the Frenchman ran up the ladder with his companion to the roof, carrying a powerful night-glass with him.

The darky uttered a whistle.

"Spec's dey done see somefin' great!" he muttered.

Waiting a few minutes for them to return he became impatient, for his curiosity had been deeply aroused over their queer actions.

He was just upon the point of ascending the rope ladder to see what they were looking at when St. Malo came back.

"Waal, you done seed it?" queried the darky.

"Yes, monsieur," returned the polite Frenchman.

"How wuz it, sah?"

"Wonderful!"

"H'm, h'm!"

Pomp expected to hear what it was, but St. Malo said nothing.

"Looker yere," said the darky, "how is I gwine ter get back to der boat?"

"Ve look for eet an' breeng you zere," said St. Malo.

"Oh!" said the relieved coon, "an' yo' help us ter fin' Massa Frank?"

"Sairtainly," assented the aeronaut. "Your friend Barney, too."

"Bress yo' heart fo' dat. I'se a satisfied nig-gah now. De doctah mus' fink I'se taken a trip sky-scrapin' fo' suah."

Just then Beauvais of Brest shouted down through the traps and St. Malo arose to his feet and said:

"He tells us to come up. We air ova'ir eet now."

"Ober what?"

"Ze flair."

"Fire! Up in dis yere climate?"

"Follow me an' you weel see, monsieur!"

With his mind very much relieved Pomp went up the ladder after him, and peering down at the earth below he was amazed to see a tremendous ring of blazing fires, down toward which the balloon was rapidly descending under Beauvais' guidance.

In the midst of these fires stood the Russian city of ice houses to which Barney Shea had been brought a captive by the men with the blue skins, and the fires burned on the towers.

The balloon had hardly begun the descent, when they heard the discharge of a rifle and saw a man running through the city, pursued by a band of the natives, who were shooting arrows and flinging spears at the fugitive.

Pomp had hardly seen the fugitive when he cried excitedly:

"Golly! It am Barney!"

"Your friend?" hastily asked St. Malo.

"Deed it am! Sabe him! Sabe him!"

"Wiz all my 'eart! Look! Ze natives see ze balloon, an' are frightened!"

"Barney! Barney!" screamed Pomp.

The fugitive looked up, and paused, while the natives recoiled and fled upon beholding the strange—to them—object that was sweeping down from the sky toward them.

From a distance they fired at Barney, who thus far had escaped any fatal injury, and he returned their fire with several shots from his rifle, that toppled as many men over wounded.

Maddened, some of the more venturesome ones recovered from their momentary fear and made a rush for him.

But before they reached the brave fellow the drag-rope of the balloon swept by and he snatched hold of it and was carried away from reach of the crowd.

Out went some ballast bags, and up in the air darted the balloon, carrying Barney with it, standing on the grapnel and clutching the rope.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FATE OF THE ICE BOAT.

THE SNOW Bird was threatened with destruction in a manner that was sure to put an end to the life of Dr. Vaneyke, and the old scientist realized it as soon as he heard the ice-bridge cracking, and felt it swaying.

As soon as he got within the pilot house, he started the electric machinery, grasped the wheel, and as the driving wheels buzzed around sending the boat ahead, he steered it for the opposite side of the ravine top.

From the verge of one precipice to the other was a distance of several hundred feet, and the ice bridge sagged down in the middle, where its general width narrowed one half, to about twenty feet.

Had it been much narrower, the wide reaching arms of the boat's frame would not have had anything upon which to run.

As the boat darted ahead, the groaning, cracking and swaying of the bridge increased to an alarming extent.

Anxiously the doctor watched the opposite side.

A thunderous crash pealed out behind the boat, for the bridge had cracked in two at its narrowest point.

There sounded a fearful splitting and grinding of the ice, and the doctor felt the bridge giving away beneath the boat.

"Merciful heavens! Will I reach the other side in time?" he muttered, as a cold, clammy perspiration burst out all over him.

It almost seemed as if the graceful boat was scared at the tumult and darted ahead faster, for as the bridge fell it reached the other side and glided straight ahead out of danger!

Down into the ravine fell the bridge, tons upon tons of ice in the fearful cave-in, a terrible concussion rending the air, and a dense cloud of snow dashing up from the bed of the abyss when the broken remains of the bridge struck it.

"Heaven be praised!" ejaculated Vaneyke.

Pale, and trembling with excitement, he sank down upon a settee in back of the wheel, so unnerved by the fearful ordeal that he was unable to move, think or speak for the space of a minute.

When he finally recovered his faculties, he looked out the windows and saw that he was gliding over the surface of a vast glacier.

The fast diminishing rain ceased, and the moon and stars appeared, affording the doctor an immense amount of relief.

"I can see where I am going now," he thought, "and can go off on a hunt for Barney and Frank. But I wonder what became of Pomp!"

He scanned the surrounding ice and sky, but saw no signs of the negro or the balloon, and finally came to the conclusion that the aerostat had carried the ducky up into the clouds.

"What the poor negro's fate will be puzzles me," he muttered, with a shudder. "Still, Pomp knows how to manage a balloon, and may get up into the basket and be enabled thus to help himself."

The doctor stopped the boat, went outside, hoisted sail, and went tacking around and around in vast circles on a hunt for Frank and Barney without finding any trace of them.

It was during this search that the image of the boat was reflected on the clouds in the form of a mirage which Frank had seen.

Dr. Vaneyke was in despair, when he came across the skeleton of the reindeer, for that was all the little lemmings left of it before they continued on their migration to the southward.

There were also a large number of dead lemmings lying scattered around on the frozen lake, and the doctor brought up the boat in the wind, dropped the jib, and stepped aground to examine them.

"Gun shots!" he exclaimed, with a start. "The creatures have only been dead a short time. It looks to me as if there had been a fight here. Frank must have killed this reindeer, and had trouble with the lemmings. Every evidence of it lies about here. But where is he now?"

He looked around, and gave a violent start, for he beheld in that quick glance several Esquimaux come from behind some neighboring ice hummocks.

They strode over to the Snow Bird, and one of them sprang on board, pulled up the jib, hurried through the pilot-house door, and seizing the wheel, he started the boat off, leaving the rest watching it in amazement.

"Thunder!" ejaculated the doctor. "What does this mean?"

He did not lose an instant, for he knew how fast the boat could go, but running after it, before it gathered full headway, he caught hold of the port runner-arm astern, and leaped upon it.

Away shot the boat like a gale of wind. Vaneyke walked over to the deck got upon it, and ran up forward.

Dashing open the pilot-house door, he was suddenly brought to a pause by seeing the steersman pointing a pistol at his head.

"Hands up!" exclaimed the fellow.

The doctor complied promptly.

"Simon Grimm!" he gasped, recognizing the boat thief.

"Ay, ay!" chuckled the man hoarsely. "I'm alive yet, yer see!"

"Lower your pistol."

"Not much! I've got ther dead-wood on yer, an' means ter keep it, yer lubber!"

"By heavens, this is startling. I thought you perished when we abandoned you."

An ugly dark scowl mantled the man's brow, and his eyes began to flame.

"Yer did, eh?" he growled. "Wall yer mistaken. I mightier died in ther storm if I adn't fell in wi' a band o' Esquimaux, who took me with em."

"Are the fellows you just left some of them?"

"Ter be sure. One o' them picked up Reade, frozen stiff."

"Ha! Frank!" interposed the doctor with a glad look.

"Thawin' im out, Reade lef ther village afore I could set ther Esquimaux on im, with a pack o' lies, an' we follered em. They're ahead of us now some'eres, an' when they meets Reade, 'e dies, sure as fate."

"Your accursed lies must be potent," said the doctor angrily.

"Ay, ay. It was me wat planted a knife Reade carried, inter ther heart o' their chief las' night, an' I swore as Reade did it, an' said I seen im!"

"Scoundrel! So that is the way you incite them on!"

"All's fair in war."

"Thank God, Frank yet lives."

"Sure 'e won't live werry long now. I don't fergit ow yer all left me ter my fate in ther midst o' a wild storm in this lone, desolate waste!"

"You deserved any harsh treatment we gave you."

"That'll do wi' yer croakin'. Come in here till I ties yer hup."

Dr. Vaneyke had to obey, for the revolver pointed at his head was bound to blow his brains out the moment he refused to comply.

Simon Grimm brought the boat up in the wind.

Then he marched the old scientist into the state-room, tied him hand and foot to a ring-bolt in the wall and gagged him.

"Now ther game is mine!" exclaimed the English sailor. "Yer won't go no further in yer wild goose chase arter ther Viscount of Pontivy an' Beauvais of Brest. I'll make yer all knuckle afore I'm done wi' yer fer ther way yer treated me. Never do I go unavenged."

He then returned to the pilot-house and started the Snow Bird again.

The Esquimaux, who had been accompanying him, were ruthlessly left where they were, and Grimm got the boat upon the trail of Frank and his Esquimaux guide and followed it.

He closed the shutters, for he did not want Frank to recognize him as the master of the electric ice-boat until he got the inventor so irresistibly in his power that he could not get away.

The upper crust of the snow was all frozen hard, a thin layer on top being all that remained, but slight as was this covering, the footprints of Frank and the Esquimaux were plainly marked on it.

Grimm had the search light turned full upon the trail, and therefore had not the slightest trouble in following it.

Gliding swiftly along, the ice-boat presently came in sight of the spot where it had before lain in the shadow of the cliff.

Frank and his guide had gone.

They were then on their way back to the igloo village.

But the keen eyes of the sailor soon fell upon a piece of white paper weighted by a stone, fluttering against the wall of the cliff, one end of the note which Frank left for his friends resting on the edge of a ledge.

Disembarking, Grimm took the paper down and saw written upon it in Frank's hand:

"DR. VANEYKE.—Returning. I found you gone with the boat, Pomp and Barney. Please start at once for the southwest of here, and after less than ten miles travel, you will find me at an Esquimaux village."

"FRANK."

A diabolical grin overspread Grimm's face.

He tore the letter to shreds and flung it away.

"Long afore he gits back ter ther village I'll over-aul im!" he hissed. "An' when we meets may ther Lord 'ave mercy on 'is soul!"

Returning to the ice-boat, he raised the jib again, the wind bellied out the white canvas and the boat tacked away.

The tracks of Frank and the Esquimaux were very distinct going back to the igloo village, and the ice-boat was easily held on the trail.

He did not have to follow it long before it hove in sight of Frank and his guide, who were trudging along conversing in broken Norwegian.

The inventor chanced to look back as the boat bore down upon them, and uttering a cry, he grasped the Esquimaux's arm and pointed at the boat.

Uttering a shout of joy he ran back toward it.

Grimm nrove the boat up in the wind's eye, and it stood with fluttering canvas until Frank reached it and sprang on board.

"Doctor!" he shouted gladly, as he flung open the pilot-house door.

Then he sprang in, came to a pause, and recoiled with a cry of alarm.

He had just recognized Grimm confronting him.

Quick to act, if he wished to succeed in his evil design, Grimm struck Frank a sudden blow with the stock of a rifle.

It came with crushing force, and felled the inventor like a stricken ox. He struck upon his knees and rolled over stunned.

"Pitiful Heaven, he has killed me!" he groaned.

Then his senses deserted him.

A gloating look of triumph flashed over Simon Grimm's face, as he glanced at the pale inanimate face of Frank, and started the boat.

"Victory!" he hissed. "Both are in my power. I can git back ter ther South in this craft. But afore I leaves 'em in this frozen country they'll both be stiff in death. I swear it!"

CHAPTER XVI.

FROZEN STIFF IN THE GLACIER.

WHEN the sand-bag ballast was flung from the balloon by St. Malo and Beauvais of Brest, the globe mounted to an altitude of several hundred feet, with Barney standing on the drag-rope grapnel.

The entire scene was ruddily illuminated, by the glaring lights on the ring of fire towers, that surrounded the ice-houses of the blue-skinned people, and the men who had been in pursuit of Barney came to a pause, with cries of amazement to see him carried away.

It was evident that balloons were new to them.

The Irishman had heard Pomp call him, and instantly realized that by some means the coon had gained passage in the aerostat; he also surmised that the balloon was the one they came in search of.

While he was making up his mind to climb up the rope, down came a silk ladder to him, from a trap in the bottom of the car, and he went up with all speed, yelling back to the blue-faced people:

"Bejabbers, I've got ther besht av yez ather all!"

As soon as he got in the car, Pomp grasped his hand, and rattled out his story, scarcely taking time to draw breath.

Then Barney explained what befell himself, the two aeronauts remaining up on the platform under the silk bag, to manage the balloon.

"Whin ther spalpeens foired ther battle-axes at me coccanut," the Irishman explained in concluding his narrative, "shure I gave a lep wid ther quickniss av a flea, an' ther grace av a camel. It brung me forninst the black-guards, afore ther axes raiched ther schpot I left, an' they hit ther wall. Sure thim axes wuz flung wid agility, an' as thrue as a pishtol shot, fer they all hit in ther wan place, an' that wuz where I'd been schtanding. Begorra, I don't see how they missed me, unless it wuz that I sprung too soon fer 'em. Anyway me shot keeled over ther chief. I jumped among 'em, an' used me gun loike a shillelah, breakin' ther heads wid comfort. Baitin' me way out, on a dead-head ticket, afore they got over thinkin' I wuz me own ghost, I run away wid 'em all ather me, whin what should I clap me eye on, but this balloon!"

"Den yo' doan know whar Massa Frank am?" queried Pomp.

"Shure he wuz lost ter me perspective entirely."

"Our duty," said St. Malo, "eet shall be to find heem."

"Wid the aid of this balloon, is it?"

"Yes, monsieur. Look here—zis will 'elp us a good deal in ze dark."

He showed Barney and Pomp a strong calcium light, and starting it a broad glare shot down to the earth, illuminating the crimson snow as if the sun shone upon it.

"Where are we now?" asked Barney, glancing down at the glacier.

"Ovair ze great crevasses," replied St. Malo.

The calcium showed them a singular view below.

The glacier looked like an enormous river of ice that ran toward the sea in a wide valley, and the surface was split across by great fissures, hundreds of feet deep, lending the ice a sort of wrinkled appearance, so enormous were they.

"Wha' would happen to de ice boat if it done

tumble inter one ob dem cracks?" muttered Pomp, reflectively. "Dey am fifty feet wide."

"Shure it wouldn't schtop fallin' till it landed at ther South Pole," replied Barney. "What makes thim opinin's I wondher?"

"Ze icy rivair eez moving all ze time toward the sea," explained St. Malo, "an' ze strain in ze middle, where it moves fastest, cracks eet across ze top."

"Ah, go along wid yez," skeptically replied Barney. "D'yer mane ter schtuff me wid fairy stories? How kin it move widout no wather ter float on, a solid body av oice loike that, be-dad?"

"Yet eet eez proven," asserted St. Malo.

"Can't yo' keep de ole machine agoin'?"

"Eet s'all be bettair zat we descend."

By managing the ballast skillfully they brought the silken globe down slowly, and the anchor grapnel caught in the ice.

When the balloon continued its fall it descended at an angle with the place where it was anchored.

Indeed, it was fortunate the grapnel caught and held, else the wind would have swept the balloon out into the icy sea.

It fell upon the shore, close to the end of the glacier, which there looked like a huge, icy cataract, pouring into the water between two

edication is that neglectfulated, it's pity I celebrate fer yez."

"Wha' yo' insinuate?" demanded Pomp, innocently.

"Widdhraw yer moind ter ther crevasses."

"Yes, honey, I 'membulate dem."

"Don't oice melt here as well as in Afriky an' Ireland?"

"Reckon it do, chile."

"Where do ther wather flow then? Shure, it ain't ter be observated atop av the glacier."

"Specs it sink den."

"It roons away troo ther crevasses, impties inter wan schtream, flows undher the oice, an'



Out went some ballast bags, and up in the air darted the balloon, carrying Barney with it, standing on the grapnel and clutching the rope.

"Ze ice move six inches a day. At ze end, where eet runs into ze sea, great blocks keep breaking off, an' float away. Zey are zen ice bergs. Zat eez ze way ice bergs form."

Just then Beauvais of Brest called something down the trap.

"Wha' de mattah up on de car ob de balloon?" asked Pomp.

"Beauvais say zat we are near ze watair."

"Wha' watair am dat?"

"Eet must be Robeson Channel."

"Howly putty! An' is it as far north as that we are?" asked Barney.

"Sairtainly; but eet ees not posseeble to say just where we are."

"Faith, I knowed as we wuz lost, so I did."

The balloon began to descend just then, and Beauvais came down and spoke in French to the Viscount, who turned to our friends with:

"Sacre, ze balloon eez leaking out ze gas!"

"We'se gwine ter fall?" anxiously queried Pomp.

"Ver' easy."

"Heah am two rubber tubes runnin' up to de bag."

"Zey conduct up ze gas which we genairate in ze car, monsieur."

gleaming cliffs of ice, with perpendicular walls abutting on the water.

There came a gentle shock, and then the silken globe fell over sidewise when the four aeronauts leaped from the car and prevented it from catching on the jagged pinnacles of ice and tearing the silk.

St. Malo found the leak at once and stopped it, whereupon the globe arose to an upright position over the car again and remained there swaying with an undulating motion.

Anchoring the car, the aeronauts then began to plan out the manufacture of more gas to replenish what they lost by the leakage.

Barney and Pomp not understanding French could not participate in the conversation, and strolled away taking in their surroundings.

At the base of the end of the glacier there was a huge opening, out of which a stream of water was gushing into the sea.

"Luck at ther soize av that cave," said Barney, pointing at it.

"Am n't dat a undahgroun' ribber pourin' out ob it?" queried Pomp.

"Faith, an' it's the ignoramus yez are," said Barney, contemptuously. "Shure, an' yer

ther glacier schpits it out here. Rats, ye tarrier, rats!"

And with a whoop, the chuckling Barney stuck out his foot, Pomp was given a gentle shove, and tripping over the Irishman's shoe, he went sliding down a declivity, toward the vent of the stream.

Long before he covered half the distance, he sat down.

Heavily.

Roared.

And saw stars.

Then he skated to the bottom, in a sitting posture.

He shot over the ice with wonderful velocity and extreme agony.

When he reached the huge aperture from which the stream flowed into the yawning opening, he shot and disappeared from view.

"Och, worra, worra!" muttered Barney, getting scared. "He's garn entirety. Suppose the woolly spalpeen schtroikes agin an up-roight icicle, or dhrops inter ther wather an' turns inter wan?"

Barney began to feel alarmed.

His practical joke might terminate fatally.

"Faith, I'll go afther him," he muttered,

after waiting a few minutes and seeing no sign of the luckless coon. "Bedad, he may be kilt."

Barney made an attempt to slide down the icy hill, but his foot caught on a protuberance, and uttering a yell, his legs shot up in the air, his body gave a twist, and he landed on his back and slid along.

"Give me a bellers," he groaned. "Me wind is clane gone! Oh, ouch, me back! It's a curry comb! I'm havin'! Schtop me floight some wan, or be heavens I'll knock a hole in ther cliff wid me fut whin I schtroike—ugh!"

The latter exclamation was wrung from his

Upon reaching the shore they were so exhausted by their struggles that Pomp laid down resting on his elbow, and Barney sat beside him to regain his breath.

Unfortunately they did not know that their drenched clothing froze stiff.

The ice began to crack presently with thunderous intonations, for the end of the glacier was breaking off into an iceberg, and the two startled fellows made an attempt to spring to their feet and fly for their lives, as great cakes of ice were crashing down all about them. To their horror they could not move.

The water had frozen their clothes so hard they felt as if they were in a vise.

Neither Barney nor Pomp ever knew how they swam out of the vent of the river; but presently they discovered that they were upon the surface of the sea, making efforts to get upon the majestic berg.

There were no more than fifty feet of the berg above water, about twice that number of feet being submerged to float the great cake of ice.

"Pomp! Are yez dhrowned or are yez kilt wid ther fallin' ice?" shouted Barney, as he gained a footing upon the berg, caught the nigger by the wool, and pulled him up out of the freezing water.

"Spees I'se nigh dead!" returned the shiver-



Within a few minutes their pursuers came up, and as Frank did not want them to destroy the boat, he went out to meet them with the others.

lips by finding himself flying into the aperture where Pomp disappeared.

It was very dark, and the Irishman did not see the stream of water athwart his course until he tumbled in, head over heels.

Pomp was floundering around, trying to find the shore, when Barney collided with him, and a wrestling match ensued between them.

Both were chilled, but the water could not penetrate their sealskin clothes, and they both imagined at first that each was some Arctic beast, intent upon ending each other's lives.

But they undecieved one another, when Barney yelled:

"Begorra, I'll not only kill yer, but I'll schtuff yer hairy schkin afterwards."

"Fo' de Lawd! Dat yo' Barney?" gasped the coon.

"Och, it's ther nagur, bad cess ter him! Get out av this ye blackguard an' schtop pullin' me nose. D'yer take me fer a bottle, an' me nose a cork?"

"Den yo' quit punchin' me in de ear wif yo' foot," growled Pomp.

The water was splashing furiously with their struggles, but they made a united effort to get out of it and succeeded.

"Pomp! Pomp! Help me ter thaw out! ing coon, when he got out o. the water and pulled the hood of his coat up on his head again.

"Kain't budge a inch, Barney!" gasped the scared ducky.

"Bad luck ter me, we're frozen inter schtraight jackets!"

"Murda! Police! Help!" yelled the coon.

Barney joined in his wild shouts, but the crashing of falling ice blocks drowned their voices, and they felt the ice shake violently as several deafening reports rang through it from all sides.

Then there sounded one awful clap, much heavier than the others; they felt the ice sink down, and a moment later they were under water.

Caught, like rats in a trap, the two hapless fellows felt themselves drowning when the icy waves came rushing into the cavern.

One end of the glacier had broken off.

The navigators then were upon an iceberg.

Its own enormous weight was sinking the under part of it which they were on.

But the influx of water, combined with their struggles, made their frozen clothing more flexible, and gave them freedom of motion again.

"Where's ther balloon? Is it wid us?"

"Dar it am, ober yonder, St. Malo an' Beauvais ob Brest in de bastick."

"Begorra, we're afloat!"

"Hi, dar, honey, how am dis?"

"Faith, an' it's fifty fut from shore we bes."

"Oh, lawd amassy, Barney—wha' happen, chile?"

Barney did not reply, but made a rush for the balloon, which the two aeronauts had partially inflated during their absence with new gas, and were now preparing to use to make their escape.

When the berg sank, they brought the balloon up near the top of the ice.

Now a new danger began to threaten them.

The berg was about to turn a complete summersault, for it was much heavier at the top than it was at the bottom.

Rocking with a motion that sent the spray flying up all over it, the Cyclopean mass of ice made a lurch and then regained its equilibrium.

Warned of the danger that menaced them, Barney and Pomp scrambled with all speed to-

ward the balloon and gave utterance to cries of warning to the two aeronauts who were awaiting a chance to get away.

Then men saw them.

But too late.

Up rose the balloon, and Barney caught hold of the drag-rope near the end, when Pomp with equal speed made a snatch for the Irishman.

He just had time to seize Barney by the legs, when the Irishman was whisked up into the air, and the two were thus carried from the berg.

Hardly were they off, when with a fearful upheaval of the water it toppled over, sunk far below the surface, and then arose, bottom upward.

The wind caught the balloon and swept it up and over the glacier.

Along it sped until it swept over the yawning crevices.

The negro and the Irishman were only a dozen feet above the cracks, and saw their gaping jaws radiating dangerously beneath them.

On, on, on whirled the balloon.

A chaotic mass of ice arose ahead, and a cry pealed from Barney as he saw the drag rope aiming directly at it.

The next moment the rope struck the pinnacles a fearful blow.

Barney and Pomp were knocked from the rope and fell.

"Heaven help us. It's inter ther crevasses we're afallin'!" yelled Barney, despairingly.

The balloon, relieved of their weight, shot up into the sky.

CHAPTER XVII.

BESIEGED BY AN ARMY.

KNOCKED senseless by the blow Simon Grimm dealt him with the stock of a rifle, Frank had fallen prostrate on the floor of the pilot house, and the Snow Bird glided away from the Esquimaux.

The kind hearted native who had revived Frank was very much amazed at the abrupt manner in which Frank left him, and he returned to his village, where he learned that the chief had been killed with Frank's knife and that Grimm, whom they also had picked up, swore Frank did the deed.

Such a crime on Frank's part was impossible, the man well knew, as the frozen inventor had been packed in snow all that night, and the Esquimaux' whole family had been with him so constantly that he could not have gone out to commit the crime without them seeing him go.

He saw Grimm knock Frank down, and therefore refuted the lie, by explaining the case, and stated it as his opinion that what the sailor did to Frank plainly showed Grimm to be the inventor's enemy, who had falsely charged the frozen man with the crime, out of pure malice.

It was then plain to be seen that Grimm must have done the deed himself, to criminate Frank, and averring that Reade had been done an injustice by their suspecting him, and some of the men going with Grimm to kill him, they all threatened to make short work of the sailor, if they met him.

Unaware that his rascality was exposed, Grimm bound Frank as he had done Doctor Vaneyke, in the state room, left him to regain his senses the best way he could, and went back to the pilot house to send the boat off to the southward.

He meant to reach the shore ice in Davis Strait, and follow it down to Upernavic, from whence he could get passage on some whaler or sealer, back to civilization again, and leave Frank and his friends to perish in the frigid zone.

Grimm had no idea what had become of Barney and Pomp.

Nor did he trouble himself about them.

During his former confinement as a prisoner on the boat, he had learned how Frank managed it, and now operated the Snow Bird with consummate skill.

The provisions, it may be remembered, were running very low, but he did not know anything about it until some hours later, when the ice-boat ran up to the dangerous crevices in the glacier.

Grimm then brought it to a pause, and passed into the stateroom.

"Whar's your compass?" he demanded brusquely of Frank, who had revived.

"Haven't got one," replied the inventor.

"Then how are you agoin' ter git away from ere?"

"I don't know. We are lost."

Grimm's face underwent a violent change, for

he saw that it was now useless to try to reach the coast, as the four points of the compass were hard to be found, even by the stars or moon.

He did not say another word, but ransacked the boat in quest of a compass, and failed to find one.

Then he went in the kitchen to prepare some supper.

As soon as he looked into the store-rooms and saw that the food was almost all gone he rushed out to Frank and growled:

"What 'ave yer done with all ther grub?"

"It's eaten," replied the inventor.

"What! Ain't none left but what's in 'ere?"

"No."

"Dash me, but that's bad—infernal bad!"

"If you want to save your life, you'll have to hunt for some food."

"Ay, ay! That's plain enough to be seen."

He strode from the room, cooked himself some food, and ate it.

"Don't you intend to let us have any?" queried Frank, who was hungry.

"No! You an' that ole cove is ter starve ter death," was the brutal reply.

"Oh! So that is the form of your revenge, eh?"

The sailor scowled, nodded, and went out to examine the ice and see if there was any means of crossing its corrugated surface.

When he was gone Frank whispered to Vaneyke:

"Can't you work your bonds off, doctor?"

"It is impossible, Frank," replied the professor.

"Nor can I, although I've nearly torn my wrists in two in the effort."

"Frank, we will soon perish if we remain in that fellow's power."

"I don't see how we are going to get out of it."

They heard the discharge of Grimm's rifle just then, and a short time afterwards he came in with some birds he had brought down, which were fluttering in the glare of the electric search light.

"Eider ducks!" exclaimed he, with a chuckle, as he entered. "Thar's millions of 'em aroun' 'ere, so I don't think as I'll starve!"

"What do you intend to do—remain here?" queried Frank.

"No; I'm a-goin' ter run chances drivin' the boat a'ead."

"Hark! What is that? Men's voices?"

"Dash me if they ain't."

He dropped the ducks, rushed out into the pilot-house, and by the glare of the search light he beheld an army of men surrounding the boat on all sides, and closing in on it.

They were the people from the village to which Barney had been taken, and their blue skins sent a thrill of fear through Grimm.

"Devils!" he yelled.

Then he rushed in to his prisoners.

"What is the matter?" demanded Frank, in startled tones.

"The infernal regions is all broke loose!" gasped the trembling man.

"I don't understand you."

"We must escape! Which way'll I send her?"

"Loosen my bonds until I see. Maybe I can help you!" quickly said Frank, as he cast a significant glance over to the doctor.

"Swear yer won't try ter git away."

"I won't swear to anything."

"Then I'll keep yer covered with my pistol."

"All right; that's fair enough."

"Promise yer will try ter get us out o' this ere danger."

"If I'm sharing it, of course I will."

"Then there—I'll cut yer bonds!"

He severed Frank's bonds, and the inventor rushed into the pilot house, Grimm following after him with a drawn revolver in his hand, with which to shoot him down, in case he tried to make his escape.

One glance revealed the whole scene to Frank.

He was startled and amazed.

There were hundreds of the queer northmen approaching, their spears, axes and shields lending them a queer, ancient Roman appearance.

"It is some strange tribe who inhabit this region!" he exclaimed.

"No! No! They ain't human!" averred the scared sailor vehemently.

"Nonsense! Can't you see that the big fellows are like us in all respects except in color? Be a man. We will fly from them."

"Ay, ay! They look aggressive!"

"Then stand by."

"What's your course?"

"In among the crevasses."

"Suppose we falls into one o' them gapin' fissures."

"We must run our chances. There are narrow roads leading between some of them. They are the only clear spots where we can run with any degree of safety. That will leave the fissures on each side to protect us from their approach. Of course the least deviation to the right or left means death—we would go plunging down in the chasms!"

"Don't risk it then!" shouted the frightened man, imploringly.

"Coward! There is no other recourse!"

"May ther Lord 'elp us then! Go on!"

Frank did not dare trust to the sails, as they would be apt to swing the boat, so he grasped the wheel, lowered the propelling wheels, and started the electric current that sent them buzzing around.

Away darted the boat, straight for the crevasses.

Frank selected a path between two of the enormous cracks, and drove the Snow Bird as straight as an arrow for it.

The peculiar natives set up a shout, and came rushing toward the singular boat, upon seeing it dash away.

"Shall I fire at 'em?" demanded Grimm, raising his revolver.

"By no means. If they capture us by chance after wounding any of their number, they would have no mercy upon us."

Grimm hastily lowered his weapon, and the boat buzzed out on the long level stretch, when the blue faced men fired a volley of spears.

Darkening the gloomy sky for a moment, so great was their number they rained upon the boat, but failed to injure the metallic shell.

The yawning chasms on each side prevented them closing in on the boat, those ahead leaped out of its way as it rattled up to them, and a moment afterwards the only means they had of approach, was to run after it.

Frank had foreseen this with admirable sagacity, and therefore knew that if any attack was made, it must come from the rear only.

The boat soon outstripped the natives.

On either side yawned a bottomless abyss.

At times, so narrow was the path, the widest spread runners nearly went in.

But Frank's cool nerve, and indomitable pluck kept them from destruction.

On they fled, and it seemed as if they would get away across the glacier, when suddenly there arose a vast, rugged mass of insurmountable ice ahead.

"We can go no further!" cried Frank despairingly as he stopped the boat.

"Oh! What'll we do—what'll we do?" yelled the terrified Grimm frantically.

"Submit to capture, of course. We can't contend successfully against such numbers."

The sailor was maddened with fear, but saw no way out of the fearful difficulty.

Within a few minutes their pursuers came up, and as Frank did not want them to destroy the boat, he went out to meet them with the others.

Instantly they were pounced upon, and the singular looking men peered in the boat, but for some reason they did not venture on board.

Capturing the three seemed to satisfy them.

They left the boat where it was, probably mistrusting it, and the three prisoners were carried off the dangerous glacier, the strange people keeping up a continual conversation in their own tongue.

Sledges and fox teams were found, and carrying their prisoners with them the whole party set out for their settlement.

Frank and the doctor were on one sledge together, and Simon Grimm was upon the other as they sped along over frozen snow and ice.

"What queer race can this be, doctor?" queried the amazed inventor.

"It is hard to say; but their conversation is made up of a mixture of Danish and Esquimaux, which I can readily understand," replied Vaneyke.

"What are they talking about?"

"Us, of course. They imagine we are supernatural, say we came down from the sky in a contrivance which I take to be a balloon, and declare that one of our number, whom they captured, killed their chief Olaf, and then went up in the sky again in the air ship."

Frank and the doctor exchanged very significant glances.

"I see," said the inventor, presently, "that you share the idea I now have in my mind, which is that St. Maio and Beauvais of Brest must have recently landed in Greenland, and fallen in with these people?"

"You are right, Frank. Such is my belief."

These men imagine that our ice boat is the balloon which has taken on another form."

"Then they are a superstitious race?"

"Very. In many respects they are like the Icelanders."

"What impelled them to keep so shy of the Snow Bird?"

"Fear of death if they touch it. We are curiosities to them."

"Have you discovered what they intend to do with us?"

"Not quite. But it is evident that they are angry at us."

"We haven't done anything to injure them."

"But they blame us collectively for the death of their chief."

"Oh! I see! I trust that they won't try to avenge their injuries."

"There is no telling what the barbarians may do."

"As Pomp was carried off with the balloon he must know about the affair."

"Yes, no doubt the ducky is now with the lost balloonists we came in search of."

"I wonder whether poor Barney perished in the snow storm?"

"Doubtful," was the doctor's cheerful reply. "It seems impossible to kill him."

"If these fellows will only rid the earth of Grimm, I'll be satisfied."

"And so shall I!"

Conversing thus, they reached the City of Ice, and there were confronted by the eldest son of the dead chief Olaf, to whom the rest told who our friends were.

He seemed to be more intelligent than the rest, for he discovered that the three prisoners were just as human as he was.

He ordered the men to lock them up in one of the houses, and there they were kept confined for several hours.

Then a man came in with some heavy chain shackles, which looked as if they might once have belonged to an old ship.

They were fastened to the ankles of the three, holding them together, and they were then led out of the ice house and conducted to the outskirts of the city, where, by the lights burning on the towers, they saw a number of Esquimaux prisoners hard at work.

They were cutting ice blocks, and erecting an enormous wall to enclose the entire city, probably as a protection against enemies.

There were fully one hundred manacled prisoners, divided into groups of a dozen each, and every group was superintended by a keeper, who was armed with a cruel walrus hide whip, the lash of which was frequently brought down upon any of the luckless prisoners with whom fault was found.

The three whites were shown by gestures that they had to work with the rest, and a despairing feeling stole over Frank, and he remarked:

"Vaneyke, we're their slaves!"

"Heaven help us then!" brokenly replied the old professor.

"I have a feeling that we will never escape these people."

"And I am perfectly confident that I shall die here too, Frank."

"Then two o' yer'll die afore yer time, if I can git a chance ter fix yer!" hissed Simon Grimm malignantly. "You're ter blame fer me abein' here!"

They were all furnished with axes to cut the ice out in blocks, and the way the sailor handled his while speaking, left no doubt in our friends' minds that he would use it on their heads if he had a chance.

A cut from their keeper's whip that almost gashed their flesh, reminded them to stop talking and set to work, and they began to toil at a labor that was destined to last many, many long, weary months!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ARMY OF ESQUIMAUX.

POMP was clinging to Barney's legs when the drag-rope struck the pinnacle of ice that arose from the crevices, and they fell together, causing the balloon to shoot up in the air.

Neither St. Malo or Beauvais of Brest, in the car, knew that the negro and Irishman had caught hold of the rope and were carried up on the glacier from the iceberg before it toppled over.

They therefore vanished the dark sky ignorant of what had taken place beneath them, yet wondering what made the balloon rise so suddenly.

Both of the aeronauts imagined that Barney and Pomp perished in the aperture they slid

into, by being carried below the sea with the berg when it sunk upon breaking from the end of the glacier.

Only a dozen feet intervened between the two falling men and the surface of the ice, so that when they fell they did not have far to go.

It terrified them to see the gaping cracks in the glacier top, for they expected nothing less than to fall into one of them.

However, they were disappointed agreeably in this respect, for they fell upon the chaotic mass of the pinnacle, and clung to its spurs, preventing themselves going rolling to the bottom.

Then, locating a clear spot between the crevices, they made their way down to the top of the glacier, all out of breath.

"Shure an' we didn't go troo ther earth afther all," dryly said Barney.

"Let's git away from yere," said Pomp, whose teeth chattered like castinets.

They made a bee line across the ice between the cracks, but had not gone far when suddenly Barney paused, pointed away to the right in the partial gloom, and cried excitedly:

"Be heavens, there schtands ther ice-boat!"

"Oh, golly!" gasped Pomp.

A short distance off stood the Snow Bird, where Frank and the doctor had left it when captured by the blue-skinned tribe who then held them as manacled slaves aiding the Esquimaux prisoners to build the ice wall around their city.

The negro and the Irishman hastily made a detour of the ice cracks and reaching the place where the boat stood, they went on board.

Of course there was not a soul there to greet them, and a fearful foreboding of trouble took possession of the two.

"Shure an' it's mighty mysterious ter me where they're garn," said Barney.

"Dey-yo' ses 'dey,' chile, when on'y de doctah wuz on board," said Pomp.

"Faith, it's blind yez are—luck at ther loikes av this roifle."

"Oh, golly! Dat am Massa Frank's weaping, ain't it?"

"Indade an' it is; his name's on therschock, an' he had it wid him when he wint off a-huntin' fer that reindeer, in ther schnow storm."

"Den he mus' hab come back?"

"It's evident, that's ther whoy I said 'they,' ye spalpeen."

"But whar am dey now?"

"Among ther missin', as yez can see be shuttin' yer oyes."

It was evident to the two men that Frank and Vaneyke could not have gone ahead, on account of the icy barrier that intercepted the advance of the boat, nor could they have gone off on either side on account of the yawning cracks on either side.

"Consequently," said Barney, "it's backwards they wint, like crabs."

"Yo' spec dey done lef a trail we could folle?" queried Pomp.

"Go out an' see. Shure I'm no bat, ter luck through the darkness."

"G'wan! Doan' be so sassy, honey!" said Pomp, going out.

When he got down upon the ice, he saw hundreds of footprints in the frosty, crackling snow that covered the top of the ice.

Barney, in the meantime, hastily examined the boat, and found that everything was perfectly intact.

Poking his head out a window, he accosted Pomp with:

"Well, me lad, have yez lit upon ther thrail yet?"

"Milliums ob footsteps yere!" roared the coon, excitedly.

"Esquimaux or woid bastes, which, be ther same token, is ther same?"

"Mens. Oh, golly, dar mus' hab been a orful lot."

"Is anny blood spilt?"

"No, sah; doan' see nuffin like it 'cept de color ob de snow."

"Then it's no scrap they had. Let's folly ther thrail."

"How yo' gwine ter tu'n de boat 'round wifoat fallen in de cracks?"

"Don't made ter. Shure we kin pull it backwards aisly untill it's on a dacin't schkatin' rink we gits, an' then, begob, it's away we kin go wid agility, upon ther thrack av ther pug-nosed blubber-alfers wot evidently schtole away ther dacent ould docther an' Masther Frank."

This plan was carried out, for it was obvious to them that the inventor and the professor had been abducted by a large body of natives at no remote hour.

As soon as they got upon the smooth surface

of the glacier beyond the wrinkles of crevasses, they hoisted the sails and started off with the search light blazing ahead to light up the trail.

There was a cold wind blowing fine, needle-like particles of ice in their faces, and they had to shut the windows for protection.

Over glassy plains, amid great hummocks, and through labyrinths of icy hills sped the boat, tenaciously keeping on the trail of the blue-skinned men, which Barney and Pomp imagined was made by ordinary Esquimaux.

"Faith, it's ther long road they've taken!" growled Barney, never suspecting for a moment that he was driving the boat straight back toward the people who were thirsting for his life.

"Nebber knowed dat de Esquimaux wuz enemies ter whites afore," said Pomp. "Dey allers done treat us well."

"Mebbe they raised ructions, an' Frank had ter break their heads."

"Reckon dat am about de size ob it."

Ahead of the boat there was a jutting wall that shut off their view of an immense, smooth plain beyond.

The moment they rounded it, a strange scene met their view.

Hundreds of Esquimaux with sledges and teams were gathered there forming a complete army, every one of the men armed to the teeth with their native weapons.

"Hello!" gasped the startled Barney. "What's this—a target excursion, or a political meetin' ter ballot for an Esquimaux alderman?"

"Spec's dar am war in de camp," said Pomp.

"Luff up! Luff up dar!"

"Faix, it's among 'em we be's. Dhrop ther sails."

Out ran Pomp, and as he loosened the hal-yards, down fluttered the canvas, and the boat slid among the Esquimaux.

Many of them were startled at sight of the peculiar boat and scattered right and left; but those who had seen and heard of the boat held their ground, and quelled the panic and shouting that ensued.

Barney and Pomp armed themselves with rifles and stood on the defensive at once, resolved to sell their lives dearly in a possible fight.

Ere they could fire, though, one of the men who seemed to have command of the immense force, approached with his hands raised.

"Shure an' it's a parley he wants wid us," said Barney.

"Den speak wif him, honey."

Barney lowered his rifle, opened a window, leaned out and demanded:

"Well, ould yaller-face, what's wantin'?"

"Me no fightee yo'," said the man, in broken English, to Barney's surprise.

"Och, but it's a Christian yez are entoirely! Where did yez learn English?"

"De seal mens, from dere," pointing southward.

"Is it paiceable yez are, at all, at all?"

"No fight yo'—fight de Goths."

"Goths, is it? Shure that an ancient thriobe entoirely."

"Blue face."

"Whist!" said Barney. "Thims be's ther wans, hey?"

"Goths hate Esquimaux; me hate dem. Dey kill Esquimaux."

"An' is it a battle yez is goin' ter give 'em wid this gang?"

"Sure. Berry good. Now all we go."

"Hould on. Afore yez toots yer foifes and bates yer dhurms, fork over me frinds wot yez hooked off av this boat—d'yer savvy!"

"White mans?"

"Two of thim, begorra!"

"We no get em—de Goths take. Me see dem."

"Sufferin' Isaac! D'yez hear that, Pomp?"

"De blue Injuns done steal dem, chile!"

"So this spalpeen ses, an' it's honest he do bes luckin'."

"De same blue niggahs wot done stole yo', Barney?"

"Bedad, it can be no other. Now what are we ter do?"

"Yo' fight?" the Esquimaux queried, pointing at Barney's rifle, with an eager look upon his face, as the hope sprang up within his breast that he might get the assistance of the whites.

"Is it invoitin' meter have a ruction wid yer yez are?"

"No fight me! Fight Goths," hastily said the Esquimaux.

"Arrah, it's wid yez we are heart an' sowl, fer bejabers if Masther Frank is a prisoner av thim spalpeens, shure an' it's ther heads I wante be after crackin'."

Pomp, shoulder arms, me gossoon, fer it's hathen sojers we are now, shure!"

Satisfied that he had gained a formidable ally

in the boat and its arms in the hands of the two white men, the Esquimaux addressed his men in their own tongue, and held a long harangue.

"Mebbe dar am fun in goin' grafted to de wah!" said Pomp who was watching the Esquimaux. "But I done tole yo', honey, if dem yere pot-bellied niggahs gwine fer ter march all broke up dat way, dey lose."

"Faix it's a few instructions I'll be afther givin' 'em in army tactics," said Barney, and descending from the boat, he called the chief of the tribe, told him what he wanted to do to improve their abilities to win a battle against the Goths, and soon was drilling the men.

The chief translated everything for him, and by the time he got through with the men, he had them fairly well drilled.

Then, telling the chief that he would certainly lead them on to a sure victory, Barney returned to the coach.

"Bedad it's ginerals we bes now fer ther gang," said he with a grin.

"Sho's yo' am bo'n," assented Pomp. "Am we all ready?"

"Yis. An' it's ballyhooly we'll be afther raisin' wid ther blue nagurs ter rescue Frank and ther docthor."

The Esquimaux were marched in files, and divided into different companies with a captain at the head of each one before boarding their sledges again.

Then they were given instructions as to how and when to fire.

Barney and Pomp then shortened sail, in order not to keep too far in advance of the dusky warriors, and put the boat at the head of the procession, with the Esquimaux chief in the pilot house to guide them.

Everything thus arranged, they started off.

It was a strange procession, not one man in the entire army uttering a syllable, yet all bent upon a fearful destruction, and they went along swiftly and silently over the lumpy ice in their sledges.

There were hundreds of these vehicles, and thousands of wolfish dogs which the drivers managed with consummate skill.

"Begorra, it's many's ther scrimmage I've had in Donnybrook Fair and on market days in swate Clonakilty," said Barney, glancing back at the army of dog-sledges skinning over the ice in pursuit of the Snow Bird bristling with furry natives and their primeval weapons, "but it's a schtuck pig to a roast duck that I niver witnessed ther loikes av sich a fight as we'll soon be afther havin'." Pomp, *agra*.

"Dat doan make me feel sorry, chile. All dis coon wants am fo' ter git dis ole billy-goat coccanut ob mine abuttin' de blue skins in de breff-bags, an' yo'll see some fun!"

"Ther blue nagurs it sains is deadly inimes wid these gosssoons, an' kills wan ivery chance they gits, fer ther spourt av ther trick, an' now ther Esquimaux is turnin' an' manes ter bate 'em, and woipe 'em off ther earth completely."

"I done hope ter glory dat dey won't harm Massa Frank an' de doctah."

"Shure, an' it's ther same game they played on me I'm afeared as they'll be afther springin' on thim, wid ther oice picks an' battle axes!"

"Sposen de blue men ain't got 'em, an' dat de Esquimaux am lyin'?"

"We'll soon see, an' begorra if it's chaitin' us they are, jest ter git ther loan av our spunk an' gun powder, I'll give this chief rats, moice, roaches an' bugs, so I will!"

It was mysterious to Barney and Pomp how the Esquimaux knew how to guide them over those trackless wastes of crimson snow, but the man never faltered, did not seem at a loss, and never told them to turn to the right or left, unless it was to avoid some obstruction.

Only the sighing of the wind, the crackling of the snow, the crash of falling or splitting ice, and the yelping of the dogs broke the stillness, and mile after mile was covered, constantly going northward, in a temperature of over sixty degrees below zero!

Over an hour passed by before the Esquimaux chief indicated that they were anywhere near their destination, by saying hoarsely:

"Now! Lookee!"

He pointed ahead, and Barney saw an icy ravine through which they would have to pass, beyond which he knew danger lurked.

"Will I schtop?" he asked.

"No! Go!" replied the Esquimaux.

The boat shot into the silent ravine, the walls of rugged ice towering up a hundred feet on either side, and the dog sledges followed quickly.

It was a short ravine, and they dashed out of

it. Barney saw by the glare of the search light that there were some men running ahead.

They were the blue skinned people, and probably had been guards of the pass who were going on to alarm the people of the City of Ice.

A broad plain stretched way in front of the Snow Bird, and at the distant end of it Barney descried the fire towers, their blazing lights illumining the glistening houses and the great wall that the slaves were building around the city for protection.

It recalled to Barney's mind the time he had been taken there a captive.

While they were scanning the city, out of it poured a host of men almost equaling the Esquimaux in point of numbers.

They were all armed, and long before the ice boat had sped half way over the plain, they were drawn up in menacing battle array in front of the city, ready to repel the oncoming Esquimaux.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ARMY OF GOTH.

FRANK and Doctor Vaneyke were horror-stricken to find themselves doomed to a life of slavery with the poor captive Esquimaux, among the cruel-natured Goths, by whom they were captured.

Nor was their confidence increased by the dire threat against their lives which Simon Grimm had made.

"It will be war to the knife between us now," said Frank as they toiled away, under their whip-armed keeper, the three linked together by one shackle-chain.

"To circumvent the designs of this fiend," said the doctor, "we will take turns watching him, since we three are linked together."

Grimm bent a scowling glance upon them.

"Watch, or no watch," he hissed malevolently, "I'll get ther best o' yer, see if I don't! Ther fust chance as turns up, I'll bury this ax blade inter yer head, up to their handle!"

Swish! came the keeper's whip with a loud snap.

It struck him on the back, and wrung a growl of fury from him.

"Flog me!" he yelled, glowering at the burly, blue-faced man. "I kin stand it. But mark me as 'ow I'll get even wi' yer!"

Swish—crack! came the merciless whip again. The keeper said something sternly in his own tongue which the doctor understood to be an order to be silent, but Simon became so maddened with pain, mortification and rage that he lost all control over his temper, and made a leap for the man.

Instantly seeing his danger from the uplifted ax, the keeper recoiled, but not quick enough to escape getting the fearful blow upon his right arm, which he had thrust out to protect himself.

It dealt a terrible wound.

Intending to follow it up with another blow, the man started to follow the keeper, but was suddenly checked by reaching the length of his chain, when he was held back like a wild beast at bay, glaring ferociously at his victim, and gnashing his teeth.

"Come here!" he yelled like a madman. "Let me get in reach o' yer. Oh, I'll tear yer limb from limb! I'll ribbon yer flesh on yer bones!"

So hard were his struggles in the effort to reach the man that he nearly dragged Frank and the doctor along with him.

"He has sealed his own doom by that blow!" exclaimed Frank.

"Shut up!" raved the infuriated man, turning upon the inventor.

"Fool! You have only made matters worse for yourself!"

"Blast it, I'll give you one, too!" roared Grimm.

He turned around and aimed a blow at Frank with his ax, but our hero parried it with his own, and dealt him a blow with the flat of the blade upon his shoulder that almost felled him.

With his temper now aroused to its height, Grimm fairly frothed at the mouth, and fastening his blazing glance upon Frank like a hunted beast at bay, he recovered his grip on the ax, and made another pass at the owner of the Snow Bird.

Again Frank turned the blow aside.

"If you want battle now," said he, getting angry at the rascal, "I will give you all you require, you madman!"

Every one of the other prisoners scampered out of the way and formed a huge ring around the contending pair.

"It's fer life or death!" yelled Grimm, hoarsely.

"So be it then," coolly replied Frank.

He saw Grimm's weapon descending for the third time, and ere it could reach him he dealt it a blow that sent it flying out of his hand across the slippery ice.

Unfortunately, Frank hit it with such force that the blade was broken from his own weapon and fell out of his reach.

He flung away the broken handle.

"Follow my actions, doctor!" he cried, thrillingly.

"Go ahead, Frank!" responded the old scientist.

Frank then grappled with his adversary, and they began a fierce struggle, while a clamor of excited voices from the spectators arose upon all sides, and several of the whip-armed keepers came rushing up to them from all directions.

Frank got a grip upon his enemy's throat.

Shoving his foot in back of the man, he gave him a push, and slipping backwards, just as he aimed a punch at Frank's face, Grimm fell upon the ice on the broad of his back.

Frank fell on top of him.

Accommodating himself to his friend's actions, the doctor followed up Frank, and thus did not let the ankle chain impede his movements.

Over and over they rolled upon the ground, and the powerful inventor held his adversary's throat as if it were in a vise.

Grimm was no match for him in point of strength, agility or any other athletic requisite to win a struggle of this kind.

"Le' go! Yer astranglin' of me!" he gurgled, turning purple.

"Cry quits then, and swear to behave in future," grimly said Frank.

"I've got enough."

"Get up then."

"Look out for the keepers, Frank!" warned Vaneyke.

A moment later the inventor and his antagonist were upon their feet, when the latter with consummate treachery made another assault.

Quick as a flash in all his actions, Frank dealt him a terrific right-hander square in the face that knocked him down again.

His hands came in contact with a large, square block of ice, when he flung them to save himself, and when he arose to his feet the second time, he had it clutched in his fists, and raised it aloft to bring it down upon Frank's head.

While it was trembling in the air, there sounded a dozen sharp whistling noises, and a number of lashes shot toward Grimm.

They hit him on all sides, searing his flesh as if he had been burned by so many red-hot iron bars.

An awful groan of agony pealed from his ashen lips.

The deadly block of ice fell crashing down from his nerveless hands.

"Jump back out of the way, Frank, or the keepers will hit you!" the doctor exclaimed, upon seeing the lashes coming.

"You spoke just in time; I didn't notice them," said Frank, obeying.

"Mercy!" yelled the tortured Grimm, wildly.

"Mercy!" Swish! Swish! Swish! came the whips again and again, and each time they struck him they ridged his quivering flesh.

He fell down upon his knees, tears of pain streaming from his eyes, held up his clasped hands and begged piteously to be spared.

But the keepers were cold-blooded and inexorable.

They had witnessed his attack upon one of their number, and meant to crush him into subordination and avenge his crime.

"I told you that you'd catch it!" said Frank, pityingly.

"Oh, God, Reade, stop 'em or they'll kill me!" beseeched the man.

"How can I?—they would turn upon me."

"Maledictions on 'em," he screamed. "I can't stand this much longer."

"Doctor, can you do anything for him?"

"Don't refuse! Don't let 'em torture me this way!" shrieked Grimm.

"I'll try to help you!" gravely answered Vaneyke.

He held up his hand to the keepers and spoke to them in the mixed Danish and Icelandic language they seemed to use, asking them to compassionate and spare the poor wretch.

They paused and asked the doctor if Grimm wasn't his enemy.

The doctor said he was.

Then they said they would transfer him to another place to work.

Vaneyke heartily indorsed this suggestion. Thereupon they ceased beating Grimm, unlocked his shackles, and taking him away he was located in another place, and Frank and the doctor were told to resume their labors with the rest of the slaves who had paused to witness the fight.

Our friends complied without demurring in the least.

None of the prisoners were allowed to converse with each other during working hours, which lasted from six in the morning until six at night, although it was impossible to tell time, as their watches as well as weapons, and everything else they had in their pockets, were taken from them.

These things had been appropriated by the dead chief Olaf's son, Thorwald.

Fortunately for them he did not sacrifice their lives.

They were fed walrus hide, so tough they could hardly chew it, for breakfast, dinner and supper, washed down with melted snow.

Then they were driven to their barracks, all the slaves sleeping in one long house with a semi-circular roof, much like an *igloo* inside, the keepers going in with them.

The Esquimaux huddled together for warmth, for the region was many miles north of the haunts frequented by them, wanderers though they were all over the face of the globe in the Arctic regions.

It was lucky that Frank and the doctor were chained together, for when they lay down upon the skins on the floor to sleep and rest, they were enabled to whisper together so their guards could not hear them.

"Doctor," said Frank, "do you intend to stay here any longer?"

"How can we get away from these shackles and those guards?" asked Vaneyke.

"I can unlock the ancient locks in less than a moment with a piece of wire."

"Even if you did we could not get away."

"Indeed, you are mistaken."

"Why, have you devised a means, Frank?"

"Certainly. We don't merit this punishment."

"Let me hear what you purpose to do."

"In the place I worked at I left a hollow in the wall big enough to hold us."

"Ah! Then you intend to hide in it till the guards go?"

"Exactly. It is big enough for both of us. Before starting for here there is a good deal of confusion among the Esquimaux, I noticed. That will be our chance. As soon as they are all gone out we can creep on the other side of wall, and if we can pass the watch towers in safety we can get away."

"When do you intend to put the plan in operation, Frank?"

"To-morrow night. I've got a piece of wire to pick the padlocks now."

"Anything you attempt I shall join in."

"It is our only chance to get away from these strange people."

"They are barbarians. If we stay they may murder us."

"It is settled then that we go to-morrow night?"

"Yes. Hush! Look out! One of the guards is approaching!"

They pretended to be fast asleep when the man came around and peered at each one of the prisoners in turn.

On the following morning they were awakened rudely, and set to work again after a frugal, nauseating breakfast of raw blubber had been dealt out to each one in proportions no more than enough to sustain life.

The day passed slowly for the impatient Frank and the doctor.

Not a word passed between, but when an opportunity presented itself Frank secretly showed the doctor the hiding-place that he made.

It was admirably adapted to their requirements.

In due time the hour arrived for them to quit work, and Frank kept a keen watch around to gain the chance he was looking for, when to his disgust Thorwald, the young chief, approached him.

"Are you both good warriors?" he asked of the doctor, in his own tongue.

"We are not afraid of anything," replied Vaneyke, promptly.

"And these strange but deadly weapons—can you use them well?"

"There are no better shots than we are in the world."

"If it would win my favor would you fight for me?"

"Against whom?"

"The Esquimaux from the south."

"Certainly, if it would improve our condition."

"You shall soon have a trial."

"Why—how is that?"

"My guards have just come in and told me that there has been an uprising among them, and that an army is approaching headed by some strange monster."

"And you mean to give them battle?"

"With every man in the city of ice."

"You can depend upon us to aid you."

"Do so, and you will win my esteem. But any treachery—"

"We do not plan any."

"It would result in your instant death."

"Give us back our fire-arms, and test us."

"I shall do so in a very short time."

He strode majestically away and the doctor translated what was said.

Frank was disgusted.

"Our plan of escape is frustrated now," he exclaimed.

"Temporarily only. Who knows what may turn up?" said the doctor.

Half an hour later Thorwald gave them back all that had been taken from them, and leading them outside of the city walls, they saw an army of the blue-faced men drawn up there in the glare of the fire towers in grim battle array.

"There comes the foe now!" said the doctor, pointing across the plain.

"Heavens, what a host! This will be a fearful encounter, doctor."

"Horrible! But what is that in advance of them?"

"By jingo! It is the electric ice boat."

"So it is."

"Barney, Pomp and an Esquimaux are in it, leading the Esquimaux."

"Are we pitted against our old friends then?"

"Evidently. But I'll bet they are coming only to aid us."

"Ha! There is the order to advance on the enemy."

The blue skinned men with gleaming battle-axes rushed forward, and as Frank and the doctor were at the head of the column, they had to go along right in the thickest of the danger.

A few minutes later the two vast armies met with a crash, a pandemonium of voices, and a terrible battle ensued between them.

CHAPTER XX.

A POTENT MEDICINE.

THE long, dreary, dark winter of perpetual night was past, and with the dawning of endless day there came the midnight sun, torrents from melting snow, the arrival of birds and beasts from the south, and a cheerful aspect to nature.

The scene was a plain of crimson snow, just beyond the City of Ice, rugged hillocks, pinnacles and hummocks arising all around.

The inhabitants of the city were sleeping, the fires on the towers no longer burned, as the everlasting daylight rendered them useless, and only a few of the blue skinned sentries, armed with shouldered battle axes, paced on guard about the city walls.

It was a strange place, among those rough, icy elevations, for the ground was strewn with thousands of human skeletons—all that the ravenous wolves had left of the Esquimaux army which came under the Snow Bird's leadership several months previously to make war on the Goth warriors.

A man in fur clothing came stealing around a mass of ice, on the eastern side, and glancing hurriedly around, to see if any one was watching him, he took up a position in the midst of the scattered skeletons, and uttered a low whistle.

After the lapse of a few moments, another man, similarly attired, stealthily came from behind a hummock on the western side and joined him.

They conferred a few moments, and then two more men came, interrupting them, one from the north and the other from the south side.

The four then formed a group, each one carrying a slave whip.

"Are you sure no one saw you coming here, boys?" queried the first arrival.

"Fo' de Lawd, nobuddy see dis coon leabe quartahs, Massa Frank," said the second.

"I had to await my chance to steal away, but I did so as unnoticed as Pomp," said another.

"Beggorra, Dothor Vaneyke, it's meself as wuz nip an' tuck wid yez on that," said the last man to arrive, "fer Simon Grimm wuz in me

way, and wuz agoin' ter give me away, whin I up wid me bit av a schtick an' hit him a belt in ther gob that told him as plain as day ter kape his tongue from waggin'."

"You are lucky in having the scoundrel under your command in the gang of slaves you have been superintending all winter," said Frank, "for we now can keep posted on all movements the rascal makes."

"Shure, it's monny's ther fine baitin' I've given ther onmannerly crather jurin' ther toime King Thorwald made rapers av us, out of gratchude ter you, fer gittin' us ter turrun upon ther Esquimaux wid ther ice boat an' lick 'em, whin we led 'em here ter woipe out ther blue skins."

"Ah!" sighed Dr. Vaneyke, regretfully; "the vast number of skeletons lying scattered around here tell a tale of fearful woe. It was a terrible battle that raged between the brave Esquimaux and the Goths in this spot! For many hours the war between the two armies went on, and the northern Indians would have won a victory at the expense of half their forces, had not Thorwald gained our aid with the pistols and rifles, and thus turned the tide of victory in his own favor. Not one of the poor Esquimaux escaped the direful slaughter of the barbarians after that, for they were cut down to a man!"

"An' de bestest way dat Thorwald he could pay us fo' frowin' de game in his han's," growled Pomp, "wuz ter make slabe driers of us, sah, when we 'spected nuffin' less'n ter git sot free an' sent home, right side up'ards."

"True, Pomp," said Frank. "It was disappointing. Since then we have been accorded many privileges and advantages; but spys are all the time watching our movements. It was only by extreme strategem that we managed to elude them to-night and thus meet together, to devise a means of escaping."

"Faith, an' it's no aisy job, fer we have got ther boat tucked away in wan av ther oie-box houses, so we have," grumbled Barney, "an' bedad it's not away we'll be after gettin' widout it, so we won't. Faith, they're so superstitious av ther boat they won't go annywhere's near it. It's hard to escape."

"More especially now that Grimm suspects our motive," said the doctor, "and keeps his suspicious glance constantly upon us. He would apprise Thorwald of our project to baffle us if he had the chance to do so. Great caution must be exercised to thwart his surveillance if we wish to hope for success. The Goths would redouble their vigilance over us if they suspected us, for they don't want us to get away from them."

"How's we gwine fo' ter git dat boat?" asked Pomp.

"A plan must be arranged now," said Frank.

"Have yez wan ter offer?" queried Barney.

"To-morrow," said the inventor, "there is going to be a great hunt in which nearly all of the tribe will participate. That must be our time."

"But there will be at least a dozen men left here, to say nothing of women and children," said Dr. Vaneyke. "That will baffle us."

"No," replied Frank, shaking his head, "I have a scheme to overcome them."

"Faith, it's two ter wan av us," said Barney, "but begob it's not out av a shindy I'd be backin', aven if there wuz fifty an' a half agin me. All I wants is me bit av black-thorn, an' plinty room in which ter break ther heads av thim."

"Ah, I've got an easier plan than that, and a much surer one."

"Den fo' de lan' sake's le's heah it," said Pomp, impatiently. "What am it?"

"Whisky!" said Frank, triumphantly.

"Drugged whisky!"

"What! Drug them?" exclaimed the professor, with a start.

"Stupefy them? Fill them with drugged liquor. I've got drugs on board."

"Masther Frank!"

"Well, Barney."

"Experiment on me first before ye put ther drug in ther liquor."

"Once they are all drugged we can steal the boat and escape."

"Och, worra, worra. Such a waste av good liquor!"

"The fleetest foxes or dogs could not over-haul the Snow Bird under sail."

"Silence!" exclaimed the doctor, holding up his hand just then.

"What is the matter?" queried Frank, in startled tones.

"Didn't you hear the ice cracking and breaking over there behind that hummock, and the smothered voice of a man speaking?"

"Faith it's a schpoy as must be afther watchin' us," said Barney.

Frank looked troubled and anxious for an instant; then he ran toward the ice, hurried around it, and saw a man lying prostrate with a block of ice upon one of his legs where it had fallen, and held him pinioned down.

"Simon Grimm!" ejaculated Frank, in amazement.

"Ah! Dash it, I'm caught!" growled the English sailor savagely.

Frank walked over to his side, and stood looking down at him.

"How did you happen to get here, caught in that trap?" he asked.

"None o' yer business!" snarled Grimm, trying to remove the ice.

"Oh, I can see how it occurred," smiled Frank. "You followed us and while lurking there behind that hummock the block of ice must have become detached, and fell down, holding you fast."

Grimm muttered something angrily, and by a strenuous effort he dragged his leg from under the block of ice, and made an attempt to get upon his feet. Frank pounced upon him.

"No, you won't!" he exclaimed. "Stay where you are, sir!"

"I want to go back ter ther city!" growled Grimm.

"To inform the natives of what you overheard? Oh, no! Not if I can hold you here! Lie still, now, or I will hurt you, Grimm!"

"I won't!" snarled the man, struggling to get away.

"Then I'll use force to compel you!" said Frank, determinedly. He grasped the man, and a fierce struggle ensued, during which the inventor's friends appeared upon the scene and saw what was transpiring. It amazed them to see Grimm there.

Grimm fought like a madman, but he was no match for Frank, more especially since the block of ice had hurt his leg, and after a brief, sharp contest, he was presently flung down upon his back and Frank got on top of him.

"Hand me your whip lashes, until I bind him!" he exclaimed.

"Let me help you," said the doctor, and within a few moments Grimm was rendered perfectly helpless.

"Wha' yo' gwine ter do wif him, till we operate yo' plan?" asked Pomp.

"Shure we'd better toi him ter ther hummock, an' it's out av ivery wan's way he'll be, an' his own way ther same," suggested Barney.

"Your plan is as good as any, we'll follow it," observed Frank and forthwith they bound the captive to an ice pinnacle and walked away leaving him there raving at them.

Returning at once to the City of Ice, they saw that no one had observed their actions, and went at once to their quarters.

There was no darkness and light alternating between night and day but when the hours of morning came, the blue skinned tribe began to rise and prepare for the great hunting expedition they were going on.

People thronged the streets, armed for the chase, foxes and dogs were fastened to sledges and as soon as a hasty meal had been partaken of, everything was in readiness for the start.

Frank stood in one of the streets watching them, when to his alarm, the young chief, Thorwald, strode up to him, and asked in the queer language they spoke, a smattering of which Frank had learned:

"Would you like to go hunting with my men?"

"No!" quickly replied the inventor, assuming a woe-be-gone look. "I am not well—I fear I am getting very sick."

"I am not going myself," said the chief, "for I do not feel very well."

"As soon as they are gone, I am going to take a potent medicine which is commonly used by my people. The effect is magical," said Frank in mysterious tones. "It is a wonderful liquid, and will cure any ailment."

"Can I too try it?" eagerly asked Thorwald. "I have seen you and your companions doctor yourselves for wounds, sprains and sicknesses before. The effect of your unknown medicines was always strangely effective. I have great faith in them. Do not refuse to cure me."

"You shall have some," said Frank gravely, and a thrill of joy passed over him as he realized how innocently Thorwald was falling into the snare he had so adroitly prepared for him. "Moreover," he added earnestly, "if all of your people will partake of some of my liquid it will prevent scurvy breaking out among them."

"Then come to my house with it when the hunters go away."

"No, you will all have to come to the house

where my ice boat is stored. I have it on board of her. My friends must aid me to prepare it."

"Summon them at once then, and we shall be there," said Thorwald.

"Fool!" muttered Frank, in English, as the young chief hurried off to dismiss the hunters. "I'll drug you so you won't know what you are doing. And now to apprise my friends of our good luck."

Walking away, Frank found his companions, and arranged a plan of action with them, while the chief was sending the hunting party away.

Within half an hour the city was almost deserted, and Thorwald bade Frank and his friends to follow him to the place where Frank stowed the ice boat.

It was in a high-walled courtyard in the heart of the city, guarded by sentries to prevent Frank taking the boat away, and to warn people off, as the natives held the boat in such superstitious dread they feared to go anywhere near it.

"Remember," said Thorwald, impressively, when Frank induced him to go aboard, as a dark look settled upon his blue face, "if any harm befalls us from taking your medicine, my people will kill you."

"We mean no treachery," said Frank, going on board after him, with Barney and the doctor, and watching the other natives coming.

The doctor brought out a demijohn of rye whisky, and a vial containing a potent drug.

"Each of us must take a glass to inspire confidence before we drug the liquor," said he.

"Bedad I'll take a dozen," said Barney, with a grin.

"Dis proved dat it amn't pizen, Thorwald," said Pomp, drinking a glass.

"There are a dozen men—all who remained—watching us," said Frank, drinking.

"Are you satisfied that the medicine is good?" asked the doctor of the chief, as he interposed his body so that Frank could drug the liquor unseen.

"Perfectly," assented the chief. "Give me some."

Frank handed him a copious draught of the now drugged liquor, and it choked him for a moment, and made him feel as if he was on fire inside, but this effect soon passed away, and the drug and spirits began to work on him.

He became groggy, hilarious and frenzied. He sang, capered around, shouted, staggered, hiccupped and soon became so boisterously talkative, that his people stared at him in amazement.

They all agreed that the white men's medicine was magical.

The guards came in and joined the others but all hands kept a respectable distance from the dreaded electrical boat.

It was fortunate they held it in fear, else during the time it had stood there they might have ventured on board, stolen its contents or broken it.

"Is not your ailment better now?" demanded Frank of the chief.

"It is well!" shouted Thorwald gleefully.

"I feel no pain—only happiness."

"Shall I give your people some of the magical liquid?"

"Every one! every one! But slight a child, and I will slay you, slave!"

"Depend upon it, then, that all shall partake of it," said Frank.

The chief was soon in such a mellow condition that he was not able to stand upon his legs without clinging tenaciously to Pomp, who left the boat, and seeing that he would soon fall down helplessly drunk and drugged, Frank hastily called up the crowd and began to delve out the liquor to them.

Not one of the Goths refused to take it after hearing what Thorwald said, and seeing what an extraordinary effect it had upon him.

Within half an hour they were all intoxicated and drugged, and reeled and staggered about the inclosure, singing, quarreling, shouting and fighting, according to the mood in which the whisky left them individually.

The inclosure became a wild scene of confusion and noise, but it soon subsided when the drug made one after the other fall and lapse into a deep slumber.

"Now is our chance," said Frank to his friends, as he put on a suit of fur-covered mail, and they all armed themselves. "Thorwald is lying there in a beastly state of inebriation and stupor, and there is no one to oppose us."

"I've started the machinery," announced the doctor. "Hear the wheels buzz."

"Shure; and we'll git up the sails, too!" said Barney, excitedly.

"Golly, Massa Frank, grab de wheel, an' I stan' on guard wif dis rifle!"

Pomp scarcely finished speaking when Frank turned the levers, and as the spiked wheels dropped down and revolved, the boat sped away.

Barney and Pomp rushed out on deck and began to hoist the sails as the boat dashed among the drugged crowd and passed on to the broad avenue, down which it sped like lightning.

Away went the Snow Bird, our friends wildly anxious for their liberty, and Frank guided her for one of the gates in the wall.

But just as she passed through she ran into an army of men.

Simon Grimm was leading them on.

They were the hunters who had gone off an hour before.

It was evident that they found Grimm, liberated him, heard of the plan to escape, and returned to baffle it.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE INLAND WHIRLPOOL.

"Arm yourselves, and fire upon them boys, or they will recapture us!"

This thrilling cry pealed from Frank's lips as the ice boat went rushing in among the blue skinned men at full force.

So furious was the charge of the boat that the Goths were knocked over like ten pins, and a wide breach was torn through their ranks.

But so compact was the mass of humanity ahead that after a few moments the advance of the boat was checked, and it came to a pause.

The canvas was all bulging and drawing, the wheels were buzzing around furiously, and tearing at the ice, and bright blue electric sparks flew out of the joints in a steady, glaring stream.

A fearful uproar arose from the Goths.

They saw at a glance that the prisoners were escaping, and as they had come back for the express purpose of thwarting any such design they opened fire upon the boat with their spears, bows and arrows.

The adventurers hastily armed themselves, and while Barney and Pomp rushed to the side windows, and opened fire upon the Goths, the doctor began firing out through the pilot-house window.

"Success was almost within our grasp!" exclaimed Frank bitterly. "How unfortunate that we met them after so easily escaping from the fellows whom we tricked in the city."

"We can blame Grimm for this!" savagely cried the doctor.

"The scoundrel has been found and liberated by the Goths, and he has told them all our plans. Unless we open a passage in their ranks ahead there, they will get the best of us."

"How can it be done?"

"I'll go out and bombard them with dynamite grenades."

"No! No! It is as much as your life is worth."

"If I don't, we are lost!"

The doctor remonstrated and offered to go himself, but the bold inventor snatched up a basket of the deadly missiles and ran out.

The Goths were then swarming up on deck on all sides.

In their rage at seeing our friends escaping with the boat, they overcame or forgot their superstitious fear of the ice boat.

Frank gained the front of the deck, and let the grenades drive fast and furiously among the Goths, explosion after explosion following.

Everywhere the deadly missiles struck, some of the men went down, fragments of ice were blown up into the air, great holes were rent in the ice, and the Goths scattered like sheep.

Men climbed up on deck with shields and battle-axes to strike Frank down, but the revolvers in the hands of Dr. Vaneyke knocked them over as fast as they came up, showers of arrows and spears whistled through the air and struck him all over, but the impenetrable suit of armor protected him, and every effort was made to kill him. But he withstood all the shocks as if he bore a charmed life, and it filled the natives with superstitious dread.

They began to retreat in wild disorder.

Vainly Grimm yelled to them to keep on fighting.

Frank saw his advantage, and kept up an incessant firing.

Several of the Goths who had gained the deck assaulted him in a body, but with his weaponless fists he knocked them off the boat again to the surface of the ice.

"Fire away, boys!" he shouted cheerily.

"Don't stop! They are now losing courage, and are retreating. Soon they will fly!"
Bang! Bang! Bang! rattled the shots from the boat.

Loud and fierce cries of rage and pain arose on all sides, and the natives began to gather huge ice blocks to hurl at the boat.

Upon seeing this maneuver, Frank dashed into the pilot house, and picking up the slumbering, drunken Thorwald in his arms, for he had ventured on board to take the whisky, he hastened out on deck with him, and shouted:

"Doctor, get the boat going quick, and we'll soon get out of this!"

He held the chief of the Goths in such a position that if any of the ice blocks were hurled at the boat, they would be sure to hit Thorwald, whereupon the natives paused irresolutely.

Holding his prisoner with one arm, Frank employed his unoccupied hand by hurling the rest of the grenades in the midst of the Goths.

There were great gaps made in their ranks ahead, and they wavered no longer, but fled out of the way right and left.

"Go, doctor, go!" screamed Frank. "Drive her ahead!"

Vaneyke scarcely needed this admonition, for he saw the opening ahead, and drove the boat through it at full speed.

On rushed the Snow Bird, but as it shot between the ranks of the Goths they paused, and hurled the ice blocks at it.

A fearful rattle of blows pealed out, and some of the woodwork was shattered to fragments by the heavy contusions.

No serious damage was done, fortunately, and as the boat went on a last volley pealed from the rifles in the hands of the expert shots.

Frank did not have a tight hold upon Thorwald, and when the volley of ice blocks came, one of them struck the drugged chief.

He was knocked flying out of Frank's arms, and struck in the midst of his men, close to where Grimm was standing.

In one minute more the boat was past the horde, and went racing across a vast open plain toward the ravine by which the Esquimaux had formerly approached the City of Ice.

The Goths had recovered from their panic, and urged on by the infuriated Grimm, who did not want to let Frank escape, they came flying after the speeding ice boat, intent upon recapturing it.

Just as Frank entered the pilot house Dr. Vaneyke uttered a cry of alarm.

"What is the matter?" asked Frank eagerly, as he grasped the wheel.

"Look ahead there!" gasped Vaneyke. "The ice is rotten!"

"Good heavens, doctor, the boat will go through it!"

"We can't turn right or left, nor can we stop in time to avoid it."

"And here come the Goths in a body, in back of us!"

"Then all we can do is to go ahead and run chances, Frank."

"Our boat will float, but we will be at the mercy of the—oh!"

Just then the Snow Bird struck the rotten ice, and the runners went in.

Down they sunk until the body of the boat buoyed it up, and the fast-beating wheels pounded and slashed at the soft ice, tearing it to pieces and forcing a passage through it.

Anxiously the fugitives watched it, and the boat tore ahead through the icy water and went upon solid ice again just as the yelling natives came within shooting range.

On it sped over the glassy surface once more, then down through the rotten ice it sunk, ahead it went plunging, forcing a passage, and at last it came out on solid ice once more.

This time it stayed, and flashed along smoothly mile after mile until at last the Goths were left out of sight far astern.

"Safe! Safe at last!" exclaimed Frank, with a deep sigh.

"Ay, and there is an 'island' ahead of us!" cried the doctor.

"Faith, it's sorry I am we've no more av a ruiction!" regretfully exclaimed Barney.

"Shure, I reckoned on breakin' twinty more heads an' puckin' ther liver out av Grimm wid a welt av me fist!"

"Oh, golly! Oh, Lor' amighty! Oh, lan' sakes alibe!" roared Pomp at this juncture, as he rushed in from the rear compartment excitedly.

"What's the matter now—any new trouble?" hastily asked Frank.

"Bress de lamb! Glory be ter Abraham!" continued Pomp, deliriously.

"Have you taken leave of your senses?"

"Oh, I'se a gwine ter dance, an' sing, an' clap my han's, an'—but whar am I, chile? Yaas—oh, yaas! Didn't yo' seed it? Didn't yo' seed it up yander?"

"See what, you black lunatic?"
"De balloon, ob course, honey."

"What! St. Malo's balloon?"
"Prezackly, sah, an' it am a-comin' down astarn ob us now!"

"Can it be possible?" joyfully cried Frank.
"Swar to it, sah. Done seed it outer de back window, fo' shuah!"

"Here we are at the island now, luff up!" said Dr. Vaneyke.

Ahead of them was a small island of verdure in the midst of the wide waste of crimson snow, and Frank shut off the electric current, and brought the boat up into the wind just as they reached the edge of it.

There was a circular elevation a mile in diameter, covered with rough grass, stunted bushes and trees and a few vines.

As soon as the boat came to, Barney and Pomp went out, and they brought the sails down with a run, and furled them.

Frank and the doctor then emerged, and looked up.

High above their heads floated the French balloon, surrounded with a belt of small balloons.

But it was evident that some accident had befallen the big globe for one side of it was dented in, and it only seemed to be depending for sustaining power upon the ring of little balloons.

It was rapidly falling earthward.
"The globe has burst!" exclaimed Frank, critically.

"It looks to me as if they would fall in this oasis," observed the doctor.

"So much the better. We will meet them sooner. Look! There are the two aeronauts now, leaning out of the car, signaling us with flags."

"Then, as they see us, we will soon meet!" said Vaneyke.

Down swept the balloon, and while Barney and Pomp were securing the ice boat where it stopped, Frank watched the aeronef, and saw it descending far in the interior of the island.

"I see about where they will land, if they don't drag!" said Frank. "Come on, and we will go to meet them!"

"As a matter of precaution," said the doctor, "we had better go armed."

"Good! You, Barney and Pomp, remain here until we return."

The two gentlemen aforesaid had become engaged in an interesting wrangle upon some disputed point about double bow-line and Mathew Walker knots, and both seemed ready to remain, to end the discussion.

"It's shtay I will, if only ter break ther nagur's nose," asserted Barney.

"G'wan, Massa Frank; dis coon doan' wan' yo' ter see me bust dat ole huckleberry blonde in de bread-basket wif my head, an' loosen his teef."

Frank and the doctor left them squaring off at each other, and circling around and around like pugilistic Tom-cats on a wood-shed roof.

By the time they reached the center of the island, they found the balloon landed in a clearing, totally collapsed, and they met the two aeronauts.

Speaking French together, an interesting dialogue of their adventures followed, when Frank learned that the aeronauts despairing of finding Frank and Vaneyke, and believing Barney and Pomp were dead, had made an attempt to get back to civilization.

Frustrated by headwinds and accidents they descended, and were taken prisoners by some belligerent Esquimaux, from whom they had recently made their escape in the balloon, after several months of extreme hardships and privations.

Then, leaving the balloon where it had fallen, with a view to returning, repairing, and using it again, the four returned to the boat, where Barney and Pomp met the aeronauts with great friendliness.

There was no food in the balloon-car, and none on board the Snow Bird, but Frank had seen some reindeers browsing the scant herbage of the island, and suggested a hunt for them.

This plan meeting with assent, all hands started off, stalking in couples, and dispersed in three directions, after planning to keep company with the boat and balloon, and try to find their way back to the south again in each other's company.

Several hours passed by, during which the

game was dressed and stored away, but St. Malo and Beauvais of Brest did not put in an appearance.

Frank became uneasy and started off alone in quest of them.

It was utterly impossible for him to cope with them unaided, so he hastened back to the boat and apprised the rest of what had occurred.

"Come, we will follow them and save the balloonists before the savages murder them!" he exclaimed, as he started the boat off under electric power.

Within a few minutes the Snow Bird came in sight of the Esquimaux.

The moment the savages saw them, they started off at a run with their prisoners, and going around a heap of rugged ice, they vanished.

On dashed the boat in pursuit, and as it shot around the ice hills it went plunging into an open sheet of whirling and lashing water.

"Oh, my God! We are in a whirlpool!" cried Frank aghast.

The curve around which the ice-boat had gone was so abrupt that they went into the whirling lake of spinning ice-blocks and foamy water before the boat's flight could be checked, and were carried around with the current.

In the middle there was a deep, roaring and gurgling vortex, down into which ice, water and drift seemed to be sucked by some irresistible power beneath, and each revolution the boat made brought it nearer the center of gyration.

A loud, triumphant shout arose from the Esquimaux, upon seeing the boat dashed into the gulf where they lured it, and they hurried away with their two prisoners, leaving the ice-boat and its inmates to their fate.

"Doctor," gasped Frank, pale and bathed in a cold, clammy perspiration, "that whirlpool will suck the boat down into its vortex, and tear it to pieces. There seems to be no escape for us. Death stares us in the face. I can't steer the boat away from the fearful abyss. We are helpless—helpless!"

And with a groan of anguish Frank covered his eyes with his hands.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FROZEN SHIP.

THE whirlpool into which the Snow Bird had been lured by the Esquimaux who held St. Malo and Beauvais prisoners, was in the middle of a large lake.

The basin was an oval indentation in the ice, with a hole in the bottom formed like a funnel, and several streams kept pouring into it, the only means for the water to escape being the aperture underneath.

That was why the vortex of the whirlpool was formed, for the water ran away in an under-ice stream to the sea, as fast as it poured in.

The tremendous suction created by the escaping water was rapidly dragging the ice-boat toward the center of gyration.

"Frank!" exclaimed Dr. Vaneyke, sharply.

"Well, professor?" asked the inventor, lowering his hands from over his eyes.

"If you give away to despair over our situation, we are doomed."

"Oh, doctor, I know it is wrong of me to give up; but I don't know what to do."

"Think! Think! You always have hitherto planned our other escapes."

"Our present position seems to be utterly hopeless."

"Don't say that! You discourage me!"

Frank aroused himself from a blank feeling of nervous prostration and swept a keen glance around at the jagged, icy shores.

"It does not seem possible to lasso a pinnacle of ice," he commented.

"No," replied the doctor, shaking his head. "The shore is too far away."

"At least not by hand," continued Frank, speculatively.

"How else could it be done?"

"Get a long, thin line, and I'll try it another way."

The professor did so, and Frank made a slip noose in the end of it, fastened it to a rocket-stick, and fired it at a rugged mass of ice on shore.

It fell, and the moving boat dragged it along over the ice.

Then it caught and held fast, stopping the boat's flight suddenly.

"Hurrah!" cried Barney. "Shure, an' it's saved we be's."

"Golly, chile, bettah wait'n see if it'll hold," cautiously admonished Pomp.

"Haul away carefully upon the rope," calmly said Frank.

"All right; you steer her," said the doctor, in agitated tones.

Slowly and carefully they pulled on the line, and foot by foot the Snow Bird was dragged away from the peril it was in, toward the shore.

The anxious suspense, delicate caution, and strained nerves of the hardly breathing navigators was painful to witness, as they fastened their rigid glances upon the fragile and brittle ice point, to which the rope was attached, holding them between earth and eternity.

Soon they were close up to the embankment.

find it. They would tear it all to pieces, out of pure malice.

"I doubt if they will pursue us, professor."

"De trail ob de Esquimaux am plain 'nough fo' ter foller," said Pomp.

"Shure an' it's hard roots fer thim Frinchmin," sympathetically said Barney, "fer if thim bandy-legged gorillas be's ther same wans from whom ther balloonists escaped, afther killin' schlathers av thim, they'll put an end ter ther Frinchmin's heart beats wid their walrus spears."

"Let us lose no time in pursuing them then," said Frank, "and we may yet be in time to save the lives of the aeronauts."

ply, and Barney went out on the port runner arm and sat down.

Left alone, Frank kept a steady glance fixed upon the trail of the Esquimaux, and steered the boat toward some jagged icy hills.

The boat was rushing along with great velocity, and bid fair to soon overhaul the fugitives, when there sounded a fearful report.

The ice split in a tremendous crack, and the runners on the side Barney was on, went down in it, keeling the boat far over.

With a wild yell of alarm, as he felt himself falling from the runner-arm down into the yawning abyss, the Irishman flung out his



Many of them were startled at sight of the peculiar boat and scattered right and left; but those who had seen and heard of the boat held their ground and quelled the panic and shouting that ensued.

Frank sprang ashore with another hawser, and made it fast.

"She will hold safely now, until we drag her out!" he exclaimed.

"Then let us do so immediately," said the doctor.

They all went ashore, and manning the lines, they had no trouble in pulling the glistening runners of the boat up on solid ice again.

All of the Esquimaux, with St. Malo and Beauvais tied to the two crosses had vanished in the south, and in the north they saw the verdant island, in the midst of which laid the collapsed balloon of the French aeronauts.

"She is all right now," said Frank, when the hawsers were loosened, coiled, and stored away on board of the ice boat. Let us start off."

"Are you going back to pick up the balloon?" queried Vaneyke.

"We will leave it there for the present, and go to the rescue of the men."

"But suppose Simon Grimm and Thorwald's blue-faced men should follow on our trail from the City of Ice, from which we escaped, and

The trail was plain, and the ice-boat was started off on it rapidly under a full head of canvas, for Frank never used the electric current unless he had to, in order to economize the supply in his batteries.

"The fore and main sails draw like sixty, but she will stand more," said Frank. "Trim in the jib, Barney, and set the main top-sail."

"Ay, ay, sor!" replied the Irishman, who was out on deck with Pomp.

Sailing close hauled to the wind, the Snow Bird glided over a smooth sheet of ice with remarkable speed, and it was increased when the jib sheet was hauled in and the big top-sail went aloft.

"Pomp, go to the mast-head on lookout," said Frank.

Up the shrouds ran the coon with the agility of an old sailor, and he did not pause until he got astride of the cross-trees.

"Doctor, will you examine the batteries?" queried Frank.

The old scientist left the pilot-house to command it had not been for his clutch upon the wheel, Frank would have been hurled bodily through the forward windows of the pilot house, and

hands to save himself, and caught hold of one of the steel bars.

There he hung by one hand over the deep pit, and despite the thickness of his fur gloves, so intense was the cold, that it felt as if the flesh on the palms of his hands was being burned.

He felt as if he could not hold on, so great was the pain.

Pomp shot from the cross-trees, struck the forestay on his stomach, flung his arms around it, and slid like a shot down to the end of the bow-sprit, where he struck with such a shock that he fairly saw stars.

The violence of the shock drove the professor in through the door upon the floor beside him, head first.

The boat came to a pause, but the wind blowing against the sails kept rocking it from side to side, and threatened to plunge it still further into the gaping cleft.

"Heavens!" gasped Frank, recovering instantly from the shock and holding himself upright with the wheel, "what's the matter?"

"The boat is half upset," answered the alarmed doctor, arising.

"C'm out yere!" bawled Pomp. "C'm out, or we fall froo de earf!"

"Help! Help fer ther love av heaven!" came the voice of Barney.

"Where is the Irishman?" queried Frank, looking around anxiously. "He has disappeared. I hear him calling for help. He must be in trouble!"

They both hurried out on deck, and found Pomp industriously lowering the sails, to prevent the wind upsetting the boat entirely into the crack and Dr. Vaneyke rushed to his assistance.

"Howly jim-jams, will yez pull me out?" roared Barney.

the bottom and feared that he would slip off at any moment.

After he got hold of Barney he could not lift him, nor could he climb up the steep incline of the runner arm, as he had only one hand to help himself.

"Doctor! Fling me a noosed rope!" he shouted.

Vaneyke and Pomp had lowered the sails by this time, and leaving the ducky to furl them, the old scientist obeyed Frank's request.

He held on to the end of the rope, and when the noose reached Frank, he slid it over his head and under his arm-pits.

"Look there!" he said in astonishment, pointing ahead.

His three friends saw a "lead," or open channel of water in the ice, in which floated a small sized berg, with flat, polished sides.

Encased within the transparent berg was a full-rigged ship.

The sails and ropes were intact, and on the deck and in the rigging they saw several men in sailors' costumes, so well preserved that they looked as if they were yet alive in the execution of their duties.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" exclaimed Frank. "Golly! How dey done git froze up in dar?" gasped Pomp.



The curve around which the ice-boat had gone was so abrupt that they went into the whirling lake of spinning ice-blocks and foamy water before the boat's flight could be checked, and were carried around with the current.

"Where are you?" shouted Frank.

"Up ter me neck in nothin'! Och, me fingers is burnin' off entiorely, an' its down I'll dhrop ter ther South Pole in a minnit, begob!"

Guided by his frantic voice, Frank saw him.

It was hazardous to attempt going out on the tilted arm of the sledge, bent down as it was, at such an acute angle, for the top was coated with slippery ice; but Frank resolved to try it.

"If I don't, he will let go, and fall to his doom," he muttered.

Desperate as the situation was, immediate action was all that could prevent a fatal catastrophe, and Frank went over the deck railing and slid down the arm, to where Barney hung.

The poor Irishman was almost upon the point of falling when Frank caught hold of him by the unoccupied hand.

"Hang on, old fellow!" he exclaimed cheerily.

"I'll get you up in a moment."

"Faith, it's loike glue I'll shtick ter yer!" panted Barney.

He was bathed in a profuse perspiration, and as Frank glanced down into the yawning abyss below them, he shuddered, for he could not see

"Are you all right?" asked Vaneyke, bracing himself against the rail.

"Haul away!" replied Frank.

He got a firm grip on Barney, and as the doctor pulled he hauled.

Up came the Irishman until he got astride of the runner, and then he climbed upon the arm beside Frank, to whose leg he clung tenaciously.

Aided by the doctor, they got back to the deck out of danger, and the four then made ropes fast to the boat, went ashore, and pulled it out of the cleft in the ice. It was not damaged.

The trail of the Esquimaux was upon the side of the track they were traversing, so that when they got aboard, raised sail, and started off, they had no trouble in following it again.

The tracks wound in among the ice hills, and led them to a wild and desolate district, inhabited by nothing but arctic birds.

Lumpy ice covered the ground, grottoes and pinnacles were to be seen on all sides, and afar in the distance towered a great mountain.

Suddenly Frank brought the boat up in the wind.

"They look like Americans, too," added the doctor, critically.

"Faith, it's roight yez are," said Barney,

"fer there's ther name."

Upon the stern of the frozen vessel they saw the name in gilt letters:

"FLYING MIST, NANTUCKET, U. S. A."

"She looks like a sealer," observed Frank.

"I know by her name that she is," said Dr. Vaneyke, "for I read of her leaving port a month before we set sail in the Polar Queen. She was bound for Davis Strait. This is the sad end of her trip."

The berg drifted slowly and majestically down the lead towards the sea into which it would doubtless float, and then, if not demolished by contact with the other floating ice, it might keep drifting on southward until the sun melted all the ice from around the ship, and left it floating on the surface of the Greenland sea with its inanimate crew.

"I'll start the boat ahead again," said Frank presently.

"Whist!" said Barney, holding up his finger. "D'yer hear that?"

"Lawks! Dar am de Esquimaux woices!" ejaculated Pomp.

"And they must be only a short distance ahead," said the professor.

The four listened intently, and borne on the breeze there came the faint tones of Esquimaux voices, shouting in the distance.

"It sounds as if they were behind yonder ice hills," said Frank.

"Ay, and they are evidently up to some mischief," said the doctor.

"Here's our weapons, shure," said Barney, handing them around, "an' if thim spalpeens has hurted ther two Frinchmen, faith we'll wax 'em wull, an' aven up ther matther be woipin' thim out intirely!"

Frank let the boat fall off on the wind again, and as the sails bellied out and she sped along, they swept around the hills and suddenly dashed into a vast open plain.

Not far away there was a circle of bee-hive ice-huts, and in the clearing among them the two crosses had been planted, each one bearing the unfortunate French aeronauts.

The Esquimaux stood in a group some distance away from them shooting arrows at the unfortunates with such consummate skill that many of the barbed shafts had pierced the victims' bodies, and the poles of the crosses bristled with them, like pin cushions.

Neither of the men were yet dead.

But it only required a few more of the cruel arrows to kill them.

The shouting, gleeful savages looked up when they saw the ice-boat approaching, and ceased firing at the two captives.

Their shots were directed upon the ice-boat instead, but the wire screens were pulled down over the windows, and the strong metallic body of the boat easily resisted the shots that struck against it.

On rushed the boat, but so closely together were the ice-huts built that it was impossible to get through the narrow spaces between them.

"Unless we get in to rescue the men, the Esquimaux will murder them," said Frank, desperately, as the boat came to a pause against the houses.

"There is no possibility of getting the boat through," said Vaneyke.

"Then, by jingo, we must go in without the boat, boys!"

"Faith, it's tin ter wan, they are dead!" said Barney.

"You all have suits of armor; put them on! Are you afraid to venture?"

"Landy no!" ejaculated Pomp, disdainfully, as he got out the suits.

"Then prepare for a hard tussle with them, boys!"

In a few moments they were attired in their suits of armor, ran out on deck thoroughly armed, and lowered the sails.

They then sprang from the boat and rushed into the clearing.

The entire band of Esquimaux opposed them, but with a ringing cheer Frank and his friends charged upon them, and in a moment more the sharp, spiteful crack of their weapons pealed out.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHASED BY AN AVALANCHE.

LIKE FOUR ancient Roman gladiators the crew of the ice-boat steadily and courageously advanced upon their enemies, with rifles at their shoulders, firing with mechanical precision as they went, at momentary intervals.

Every time their weapons were discharged some of the Esquimaux fell wounded, and a terrific uproar arose among them, when they saw that their spears and arrows could not pierce the armored clothing of the whites.

Suddenly they broke ranks, scattered, and fled in all directions.

"After them!" shouted Frank. "Drive them out of the inclosure!"

"Look out for the Frenchman!" warned the doctor.

"What's up?"

"Two of them are running for the crosses, with raised spears!"

"Oh! They are bent upon plunging them into the captives!"

"Single out the one on the left, Frank; I will take the right!"

"Ready? Then fire!"

Bang!

Bang!

Both of the men fell wounded.

Directly in front of the two crosses,

And just as they were about to plunge the spears into the captives!

"They are safe!" exclaimed Frank. "Come, and cut them down!"

"Go on! Barney and Pomp are driving the rest out," panted Vaneyke.

They ran up to the two crucified men, who were groaning with pain and bleeding from their wounds, whipped out their knives and cut their thongs, when they were enabled to lift them down.

Both of the poor fellows were in a half senseless state, as they were laid upon the ground, and the doctor made a hasty examination of them.

"Painful wounds," he commented presently, "but none of them are necessarily fatal. I'll extract the arrows, and bandage them up."

"Here is a flask of whisky," said Frank, proffering one. "It will do them good. The boys have driven the Esquimaux out, doctor."

The liquor stimulated the two men wonderfully, and the doctor hastily made them as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

While they were so engaged Barney gave utterance to a wild whoop.

"Arrah, it's thaves yezare! Lave go av that, or be ther hokey I'll— Hey, Masther Frank! Docthor! Come here wid yez! Murdher, but they've got it!"

"Stop dat! Stop dat! Stop dat!" roared Pomp frantically.

Then a volley of shots pealed out from their rifles rapidly.

"Let's see what all the rumpus is about!" said Frank.

"Here! Help me to get these Frenchmen in an igloo first."

"Haven't got time—come, quick!"

"Natives may sneak in and kill them, Frank."

"True—true. Hurry up now, doctor."

They tenderly lifted the wounded men and carried them into a hut, then they started on a run for Barney and Pomp, who were hidden behind the houses, across the inclosure.

When they got there they found the Esquimaux stubbornly holding the two angry men at bay despite their sharp firing.

"What is the matter?" panted Frank.

"Faith, they've hooked ther boat, sorr!" said Barney blankly.

"An' dar it goes hitched ter dem dog teams off yander!" said Pomp.

"Heavens," muttered Vaneyke, "they are over a mile away!"

"Shure we wanted to schtop 'em," explained Barney, almost crying with mortification, "but, be heavens, these spalpeens stood up for ninst us an' got shot down agin loike ten-pins, widout so much as winkin'."

They all began to fire upon the Esquimaux now, and with loud cries of rage the dusky warriors fled with remarkable fleetness.

Fully a mile away the Snow Bird was being rapidly drawn along to the southward by several teams of dogs, the decks overrun with the majority of the tribe.

"Down with these beggars and follow them," cried Frank excitedly. "If once they get too far off we will never overtake them."

"And failure to do so," said the doctor, "means our abandonment here to ultimately perish. No, no! We must not lose the boat."

"Sack it to them, Pomp!" yelled Barney.

So furious was the onslaught they made that not one of the stubborn natives escaped a wound, those who could not run falling prostrate on the ice.

Frank saw one of the men produce a sledge and team from one of the huts with the evident intention of pursuing his friends.

"That is just what we want to follow the ice boat!" he cried, and running up to the Esquimaux he pointed a revolver at him, and:

"Halt!" he cried, in the man's own language.

The savage held up his hands in token of submission.

"I want you to carry us on the sledge after my ice boat," proceeded Frank. "And if you fail to use your utmost endeavors I'll blow your brains out and drive the team myself!"

"Do not fire, and I will obey you," tremblingly answered the Esquimaux.

"Get on board here!" shouted Frank to his friends.

They all got on the sledge, and as the rest of the natives vanished behind some distant ice hills, Frank pointed after the Snow Bird, and cried:

"Now go! Drive as you have never driven before! If you do not overtake the ice boat in half an hour you will perish!"

He alone stood up, and with his pistol muzzle pressed against the man's head, he urged on the team with his own voice.

Crack! went the long-lashed whip uncoiling itself over the pack of long-haired dogs, and away they scampered, yelping, snarling and barking, over the glassy ice, the sledge gliding along as easily and smoothly as the ice boat went.

Loud and sharp pealed the man's cries to the dogs to hurry, like pistol shots rang the tones of the cutting lash, and a hissing and crackling noise arose under the wooden runners of the sledge, while the nipping wind whistled past their faces, and the sharp needle-points in the frosty air nipped and pricked their skin painfully.

Away scampered the dogs at the ends of the long traces, and faster and faster they ran when they got warmed up to their work until the sledge fairly flew along like the wind.

"We are overtaking the iceboat!" said Frank, presently.

"Bully fo' us!" chuckled Pomp.

"The men on board of her see it too!" said the doctor.

"Begorra, it's behint thim oice hills they'll soon be," said Barney.

The scared Esquimaux never said a word, except when he yelled at the flying dogs, for the cold barrel of Frank's revolver was kept pressed so suggestively against his head that he feared for his life, and saw that any treachery or resistance would prove fatal.

So swiftly did the sledge speed along that in less than half an hour it arrived within gunshot of the iceboat, and our friends saw that the men on it were laboring under extreme difficulty in the management of the several teams pulling it.

"One more struggle now and the Snow Bird is ours," said Frank.

"I've got at least a dozen shots left," said the doctor.

"There bes tin dead min in my shootin' irons," added Barney.

"De same numbah ob widder-makers heah," said Pomp.

A few minutes afterwards they ranged up to the iceboat and Frank fired several shots from his revolver among the dogs.

Three of them fell dead, and the rest stumbled over them, scattered in affright and as the sledge ran upon them a scene of the most intense confusion at once ensued.

A moment later the Snow Bird came to a pause.

All the Esquimaux sprang off on the ice as our friends dashed up and leaped from the sledge.

"Now, boys, go for them!" cried Frank.

A volley pealed out and the Northmen scattered and retreated.

"Go for the boat and capture it!" was Frank's next command.

It was done with such a will that our friends got on board before the Esquimaux fairly recovered from their alarm.

The Esquimaux charged on them, however, and a hand to hand struggle took place on deck, in which our friends each had six to contend against.

They beat them off as fast as they came up, however, and then got inside of the deck house, from which place of vantage they had not the least difficulty in driving their enemies away.

Upon seeing how useless it was for them to keep on contending for the boat, the furious Esquimaux retreated.

"There is no use of us remaining here any longer," said Frank, as he cut the traces of the dog teams from the Snow Bird and drove the howling beasts away. "Let us return to the village, pick up St. Malo and Beauvais, of Brest, and we can then go to the island where the collapsed balloon lays and get it."

"Good!" assented the doctor. "The aeronauts have got a compass and other instruments in the car of the balloon, and by their aid we can find our way back to the coast, and get down to the southward again. It is our only hope for salvation, Frank, for without them we are irrecoverably lost in this land of crimson snow."

Acting upon this suggestion, they raised sail and started back the way they came from, and found that beyond stealing a few articles the Esquimaux had done no damage to the Snow Bird.

Back to the village went the boat, and the two aeronauts were taken from the ice hut, gently carried on board, and were put in separate bunks.

Doctor Vaneyke then dressed their wounds properly, and seeing that they would only be laid up a few days, he left them sleeping sound-

ly from the effects of an opiate he administered to rest them.

The trail back to the "island" was plain and easy to follow.

Within a short time the boat came to a pause on the edge of the oasis, and leaving Barney and Pomp on board, Frank and the doctor armed themselves and went into the interior of the island.

Arriving at the spot where the balloon was, they came to a sudden stop.

A cry of consternation pealed from Frank's lips.

He convulsively grasped the doctor's arm, and pointed at the ground.

In such a case, it was useless to expect to ever get them back and the two dispirited adventurers returned to the boat to apprise their friends of their misfortune feeling very sad at heart.

Barney and Pomp shared their grief.

"Faith," said the former with a heavy sigh, "it's a goner we be's now, an' if iver I do git back to Readestown, the Ould Nick himself would have ther devil's own toime gittin' me anywhere's where there's ice, except in ther likes av a glass av whisky."

"Let us leave this bleak region," said Frank.

"We can guess for the south, and follow a certain direction continuously. Thus we are

ing masses of ice," said Frank. "Should they become detached, they would crush us!"

"But look ahead there!" said the doctor. "What a level stretch this icy road takes down the mountain side. We need no sails or the use of the wheels to descend this hill to yonder plain."

"It will be a swift ride down, and I'll need only the brake to retard our speed," said Frank. "Lower the sails, boys."

Barney and Pomp hauled down the canvas, and the boat began to glide down the narrow ledge-path that jutted from the side of the mountain, when they were startled by hearing



Frank gained the front of the deck, and let the grenades drive fast and furiously among the Goths, explosion after explosion following. Everywhere the deadly missiles struck, some of the men went down, fragments of ice were blown up into the air, great holes were rent in the ice, and the Goths scattered like sheep.

"Doctor, the balloon has been torn to ribbons by the savages!" he cried, hoarsely. "And see, the car has been demolished, and all of the things that were in it have been carried away!"

"The compass and all?"

"Everything!"

"May the Lord help us, now!"

"Lost as we are, without those things we cannot guide ourselves back to civilization again, and must remain here in this bleak country perhaps forever, vainly going hither and thither, hopelessly groping to find our way to safety."

The people who destroyed the balloon had torn the silken bag from the ropes, and the wicker basket to pieces so small that they were scattered all over by the wind.

Frank and the doctor were sorely distressed over this crowning misfortune, and although they searched all over for some evidence of the implements they wanted, nothing was to be found of them.

Such metallic articles, they well knew, excited the cupidity of the natives, and would be more highly prized than so many diamonds,

bound to bring up at some shore of the ocean. Then we can follow it and ultimately we will get away from this cheerless country. The object of our coming here is accomplished. We have found the two lost aeronauts, and have nothing else to keep us here."

"Cep, it am fo' ter plug Simon Grimm wif a leaden pill!" growled Pomp. "Dis coon alers wanted ter git square wif dat pizen trash, an' fo' de Lawd, I'specs de time 'll come when I'se gwine fo' ter do it too!"

"Let us leave him to the barbarous mercy of the blue skinned Goths," said the doctor. "They will not handle him with kid gloves!" Tired out as they were, a watch was set, and they all had a good rest, after which the Snow Bird was put under sail, and pursuing a drove of musk-oxen, they sped away.

Several days of continuous traveling brought them in amid the mountains, and Frank advanced with extreme caution, for the boat was going along an icy ledge that spurred a gigantic mound, and was about to descend the other side.

"There is death overhead in those over-hang-

a fearful thunder of sound behind the boat, and glanced back.

An enormous block of ice had broken loose, fell down on the path where it was split into a dozen huge cakes, and they came thundering down after the boat, threatening to crush it to pieces.

"Hang on for your lives!" shouted Frank in startled tones. "I must let the boat go down the hill at full speed, or we are lost!"

And loosening the brake, the Snow Bird's runners fairly screamed as with lightning-like rapidity she flew down the declivity, followed by the crashing blocks of ice. Unless they kept ahead of the avalanche, it would smash the boat and its crew into fragments.

CHAPTER XXIV.

KYACKS AND OOMIAKS.

Down the mountain side rushed the ice boat at a terrible rate of speed, pursued by the avalanche of ice, toward the level plain below. The ledge upon which the boat ran was no more than wide enough to let it run along without the runners on one side going over the

edge, or those on the other side striking against the face of the cliff.

Here and there cracks and lumps were met that made the Snow Bird jump, occasionally the grade rose on either side and tilted the boat at acute angles, and she rushed through snow drifts so deep that the runner arms were sometimes buried.

It was a terrible ride on account of its velocity, for the grade was so steep that fully two miles a minute must have been the speed.

Thundering like the crashing of stormy clouds, the huge blocks of ice came tumbling down the road after them.

"Be heavens," said Barney, "I feel as if I wuz roidin' on a sthreak av greased lightnin'."

"Heah we am at de plain now, honey," remarked Pomp nervously.

Down upon the smooth, glassy surface of a great ice plain ran the boat, and Frank cautiously lowered the spiked wheels to check the awful speed at which they were traveling.

"If the windows of the pilot house had been open," he remarked "the force of the wind would have choked us, coming down that slide. The wonder to me is that the glass was strong enough to resist its pressure without going to pieces."

The wheels grated and scraped along over the

same forms and features, the new comers were evidently another tribe of these northmen, who had settled in that remote region.

They exercised the utmost caution in approaching the boat, for its strange aspect while arousing their curiosity, filled them with a certain amount of timidity.

"Hail them, Vaneyke," said Frank, "and find out who they are." The professor nodded, and opened the front window.

"Hello!" he cried in the Esquimau language.

"Whence come you, friends?"

"Ah! You are white men!" ejaculated one of the strangers pausing.



Encased within the transparent berg was a full-rigged ship. The sails and ropes were intact, and on the deck and in the rigging they saw several men in sailors' costumes, so well preserved that they looked as if they were yet alive in the execution of their duties.

"It is a close race between the ice and ourselves!" said Frank.

"We are yet in the lead," said the doctor, glancing back.

"Is the avalanche gaining?"

"Not an inch."

"Ha! There's a curve ahead!"

"Good! It's our salvation."

"Hang on!"

Whiz! went the boat around the bend like a streak of lightning.

Boom! boom! came the flying tons of ice hotly in pursuit.

As the boat rounded the curve the ice shot straight ahead, and flew off the edge of the ledge, down, down into the gulf below, where it struck with a deep intonation, and was shivered to fragments.

Only a meager proportion of the smaller pieces followed the boat, but they were incapable of doing it any serious harm.

"We are safe now. I expected the ice to go off the ledge," said Frank.

"It was a narrow escape," grimly replied the doctor.

ice with a blood-curdling noise, and the terrible rate of speed at which the boat was going gradually began to diminish, until after going about a mile further, the Snow Bird finally came to a pause.

"It looks as if we were upon the surface of a huge lake or inland sea," remarked the professor critically, as he glanced out the windows. "Just see how smooth and level it is."

"There is open water ahead there several miles," said Frank.

"Faith an' it's a reindeer team as is a comin' t'wards us too," said Barney.

"No, bedad, it's a dozen av them, d'ye moind," said Pomp, pointing ahead.

There were several distant small dark objects rapidly coming toward them, and within a short time they arrived at the boat.

They looked very much like Lapland sledges, shaped somewhat like whale boats with the sterns cut off abruptly, each vehicle being covered with skins, and were drawn by a team apiece of tame reindeers, driven by a solitary man in each sledge.

Dressed like Esquimaux, and having the

"Come nearer. Have no fear. We are good people."

"But your sledge is strange in appearance." "We sail it like a boat instead of using dogs or deer."

"Oh! We wondered at it greatly. Are you from the south?"

"No, we came from the north, but are anxious to go to the south."

"I can direct you. But come first to our village and eat with us."

"We will. Drive back and we will follow you."

The man said something to his companions, and away dashed the reindeer teams, followed closely by the ice boat.

They soon reached the village, which stood near an open, unfrozen sheet of water, and bringing the boat to a pause, our friends alighted and joined the Esquimaux, who were a very friendly, peaceable tribe of hunters.

The chief of the tribe met them with his interesting family of twenty children, and after a few desultory remarks conducted the four adventurers into his igloo, where an Esquimau lamp was burning.

There they had the pleasure of sitting in a circle and munching on pieces of raw seal fat, and watching the chief's wife chewing on a pair of her husband's boots to make them soft and flexible, while the melting ice of the igloo dripped chillingly down their backs.

When this performance was completed our friends were conducted outside, where the whole tribe was congregated, and there had their noses rubbed out of joint against the noses of each individual, according to their form of friendly salutation.

Frank then drew the chief aside and began to question him.

"Will you show us the way to the southward?" he asked first.

"Yes, when you are ready to depart," replied the Esquimaux.

"Isn't this ice covering a large lake?"

"Yes. There is a stream from it that runs to the Eastern Sea."

"The Eastern Sea?" echoed Frank with a violent start.

"Why, yes; we are within one day's travel of the eastern shore."

"Great Heaven! Then we have been going east, instead of southward."

"Have you? Then you are disappointed?"

"Fearfully. We cannot meet ships on this side of Greenland."

"Not now. There was once a time, centuries ago, when you could."

"In the time of Eric the Red? Yes, I know about that."

"Sometimes the Iceland people come over on this side."

"They could not do us any good."

"But," continued the Esquimaux, ignoring the interruption, "it is very dangerous navigating the river into this lake, for the tide rises and falls to a height and depth of over fifty feet quite suddenly."

"That is a wonderful rise; but I have heard of it before."

"Do you see yonder hills rising on the edge of the lake?"

"Those huge pyramids looking like Norman castles?"

"I do not know what you mean by castles, but those are the ones I refer to. They are hollow at low tide, and filled at high tide with water. Once some people must have gone into them, but they never came out again."

"Indeed. Did you find their remains in there?"

"The bodies of the men are frozen in the ice in the walls of the caves."

"I would like very much to see them."

"Be careful of the rising tides if you should venture in. You would for safety, have to enter when the tide is running out, so as to gain time to emerge before it comes rushing in again."

"I shall heed your warning."

"Moreover, although there is an aperture to get in on the landward side, the best view of the frozen bodies is to be obtained by going in on the lake side where the danger lies, by means of a kyack, or an oomiak which the woman of our tribe row."

"Let us go at once, then," said Frank. "The tide is running out now, I see."

"Yes, and when it is all out," said the Esquimaux chief, "it leaves the ice we are now standing on at an elevation of fifty feet above the surface of the lake. Some time its great weight causes it to give away when down it falls with a crash—a fearful downfall—a chaotic mass of broken ice—an awful cave-in that carries everything with it."

"I wouldn't want to be on the ice when it falls," cried Frank shudderingly.

They went to the water's edge where the kyacks and oomiaks were moored, and there met Vaneyke, Barney and Pomp with some natives.

The oomiaks were high, light boats of skins, fur side in, stretched over frames, and containing from four to six seats each.

Somewhat resembling racing shells for one man, the kyacks only held one Esquimaux, his body being all the ballast it contained and his double bladed paddle serving as a balance for it.

Perfectly ignorant of how to manage the frail, skin boats, Frank and the doctor each embarked in one, while the natives held them steady.

The skin deck covers were locked around their waists, they each took a paddle, and as soon as some of the other men were ready, they were let go.

Frank and Vaneyke began to paddle.

But only a few strokes.

The kyacks fell over sidewise, and the next instant floated keel upwards, Frank and Vaneyke hanging head downward in under water.

A shout of laughter arose from the spectators.

Fastened into the boats, Frank and the doctor could only move their bodies, heads and arms without being able to liberate themselves.

Had not some of the boatmen hauled them up at once, they would have been drowned, as they could not aid themselves.

"These things are regular death-traps," said Frank to an Esquimaux.

"No," replied the laughing man. "It depends upon how you manage them. Watch how I balance mine, and turn a somersault in the water with it. You can soon learn to do the same."

Frank and the doctor soon learned how to balance the kyacks.

Then the Esquimaux swept his paddle in the water, upset his boat sidewise, his body passed down in the water, and he came up out of it on the opposite side grinning, as if it were great fun.

With a little explanation Frank and the doctor each learned how to do the trick as well as the most expert natives.

Barney and Pomp both refused to go in the kyacks after they witnessed Frank's experience, but readily consented to go in the oomiaks, more especially as the crews of these boats were composed of females.

The steersman of Barney's oomiak was the chief's wife, who had on pants, as did the rest of the women, and carried her infant in a fur papoose holder strapped upon her back.

Pomp's pilot was a fat woman with a big ivory shark's tooth stuck through the septum of her nose, and a dozen hideous colored streaks of dye gridironing her pudgy face.

The darky was evidently a great favorite with the greasy, dirty ladies of Greenland, judging by the marked attention they paid him, whereat Pomp softly chuckled and gently rocked his oomiak, nearly capsizing it.

A thump in the stomach, which one of the Esquimaux maidens dealt him as a gentle reminder to keep still, wrung a grunt from his lips and caused his face to assume a grave-yard expression.

Then the fleet of boats set out for the icy cavern.

Soon reaching it, they found that the tide was all out, and the boats passed through the great arched opening into a vast grotto.

Frank and Vaneyke had gone ahead with the chief in their kyacks, and a cry of wonder escaped them when they got well into the cave, for it was as light as day inside, and they saw within the walls of ice through which the stream wound, a vast number of human beings.

They were massive men in leggings and tunics of fur, with round caps on their long hair, decorated with upright fox-tails, and in their hands they bore maces, battle-axes and shields of ancient style.

"They look as if they were behind glass doors of vast show cases," said Frank.

"Evidently they are Norsemen, like the ancestors of the Goths," said Vaneyke.

"You can see some of their boats further on," said the Esquimaux.

Just then there sounded a fearful furore of feminine shrieks at the mouth of the cavern, for the crews of the two oomiaks had been racing to see which would reach the mouth of the cavern first.

Pomp was in the lead, when Barney grasped the steering oar in his boat and turned it to take a short cut, when it ran into the other.

Both boats were torn to pieces, and began to fill and sink, which caused the clamor of voices that startled Frank, Vaneyke and the chief.

Startled, the chief hastily paddled back to learn the cause of the disturbance, leaving Frank and the doctor alone in the cave.

The cries of Barney and Pomp apprised them of what occurred.

"Let us go on," said the inventor, carelessly. "The other boats will see to them, and Barney and the coon can take care of themselves."

He saw an arched opening in the wall, and followed by the doctor, drove his kyack through it into a partially dark passage.

The moment after they got in they felt their boats shoot a fall.

It was not a big one, but it carried them below the level of the flow of the other cavern, and left no way to retreat.

"This is bad," said Frank, uneasily, as he looked back up at the top of the fall they came over. "How are we going to get out of here?"

"We can't ascend the fall, that's evident," said the doctor.

"Look at that; the tide is turning already," Vaneyke.

"Heavens! how swift it pours in here!"

"In a short time this cavern will be flooded."

"Then we are in danger of drowning, Frank."

"Let us call for assistance to get out of here."

Long and loudly they cried out for help, as they held their boats stationary at the base of the fall. But no response came back but the echo of their voices and the dull splashing of the water pouring into the cave and rapidly filling it up.

CHAPTER XXV.

ENTOMBED IN AN IGLOO.

BARNEY and Pomp were in a towering rage at each other, out at the entrance to the main cavern after the accident to their boats.

"Faith an' it's ther jacksass boatman yez are," shouted the Irishman, when he saw the consternation of his crew and observed that the oomiak he was in was fast filling with water and momentarily threatening to sink. "Shure an' I'd be affther takin' a lesson in steerin' wid me oyes open, if I wuz you!"

"G'wan!" retorted Pomp, bailing out the boat he was in as fast as he could to keep it afloat. "Reckon yo' am snow-blin', Barney Shea, kase nobuddy but a google-eyed possum'd run a oomiak de way yo' did. Fo' de Lawd, dis coon allers flink yo' hab mo' speck fo' de wenches dan ter fump 'em in de middle ob dar boat out yere in deep watah whar dey'll all drown. Pull in fo' de sho', leddies, or by gosh amighty, yo' kin say yo' prayers ef yo' doan' know how ter swim."

Both boats were forced over to the icy shore by the terrified girls without this unintelligible mandate, and both crews leaped out on the ice just as the kyacks came sweeping over to them.

Full of gallantry, the Irishman and the coon remained on board until the females disembarked; then they were about to follow them when the boats rapidly filled and sunk, leaving the two men submerged.

"Yah!" roared Pomp, shivering, as an icy chill went through him from the freezing water. "Ise done friz, gosh blame yo' Barney."

"Thaw me out," shouted Barney, as a freezing shock flew up his back bone. "Put me on a furnace! Mother av Moses, it's as schtiff as a poker I'll be in ther mornin' wid me blood below zero. Pomp, ye aould spalpeen, I've swallied a gallon av oice an' wather!"

They struck out for the icy shore, and Barney caught hold of it to haul himself out when Pomp grabbed him by the leg stopping him.

Splashing and struggling to hurry out of the cold brine, they only retarded each other's movements, and remained in much longer in their efforts to get ahead of each other.

By that time some more of the oomiaks had come up and taken the females on board, when the struggling negro and Irishman were unceremoniously seized by the hair of their heads and hauled into one of the boats by the jabbering female crew.

"Where's Masther Frank an' ther docthor?" demanded Barney, glancing around uneasily. "Haven't they come out av ther cave yet?"

"Doan' see dem, chile," replied Pomp.

"Heah come all ob de kyacks out ob de cave, but dey ain't wif dem as I kin see."

"Faix, it's schared thim yaller nagurs looks too."

"Oh, golly! De tide hab tun'd, honey! See it pour inter de cave!"

"An' it is in there Frank an' ther docthor yet bes?"

"Fo' shuah; whar else can dey be?"

"Och, worra, worra, it's dhrownt they'll be!"

"Hey! Massa Frank! Docthor Vaneyke! C'm out ob dar!" yelled Pomp.

"Shure ther toide is afflin' ther cave!" roared Barney.

A look of horror settled over their faces, for they saw that what the Esquimaux chief had told Frank was true.

The tide was rising with awful speed, pouring into the mouth of the cavern in a wild torrent, and evidently threatened to fill up the cave within a very few minutes.

"Row over there," said Barney to his crew in broken words of their native tongue. "We must get them out before the cave fills up!"

"No!" replied one of the girls in alarmed tones. "Once we should get in the swift current pouring into the mouth of the cavern, we would not have strength to resist it and would have our boat swept in and our lives destroyed!"

"Have our friends not come out yet?"
 "No. The chief said they have gone far in, and over the fall."

"Murder, Pomp!" groaned Barney, turning to the coon. "D'yer moind that?"

"Chuck de wenchies overboard—seize de boat—an' le's go affah dem!" roared Pomp, excitedly, as he suddenly caught hold of his pilot to carry out the plan that flashed through his mind.

"Faith, 'tain't no use," said Barney, despairingly, as he pointed at the aperture into which the boats had gone. "Shure, an' ther hole is all covered up. We couldn't git in if we wanted ter, Pomp."

"Am dey dead?" roared the ducky, with a horrified expression.
 "Heaven rest their souls, I hope not, but it tucks as if they wor."

The chief just then gave word to his people to return to the village, and apprised Barney and Pomp that they could not do anything for six or eight hours, when the tide receded again.

Much as they hated to go away, leaving Frank and the doctor's fate undecided, they saw that it was perfectly useless to remain there any longer, as nothing could be done.

"When we get back to the village," said the chief, "you can both get ashore. You can see that it is impossible to do so here. The embankments are too high up to reach them from the oomiaks. Then you can go around the ice-hills to the back of them. There is an aperture in back through which you can go into the cavern and perhaps—if it is not frozen over, as it sometimes is—you may get into the cave and learn the fate of your friends."

"Faix, it's cowl comfort he gives us, but begorra it's better nor none at all, so it is," said Barney, dejectedly.

"Den tell 'em to ter row like blazes," said Pomp.

Away went the boats, and in due time they reached the shelving ice at the head of the lake, where they went ashore.

Not wishing to run any chances about the ice boat, Barney first went on board, and found Beauvais and St. Malo sitting in the pilot house, recovering from their arrow wounds.

"Kape guard av ther boat an' allow no wanter board her ontill we come back," said the Irishman. "If it's anny trouble yez has wid ther yaller nagur, ther two av yez knows how ter start ther machinery an' run away wid ther Snow Bird."

"Monsieur can depend zat we be ver' careful," assured St. Malo.

Assured that the boat was in safe hands, Barney alighted, and joining Pomp and the chief, he hurried away with them toward the icy hills in which Frank and the doctor were entrapped.

It was a long walk, and when they finally arrived there they proceeded toward a chaotic mass of ice, under the chief's guidance.

He entered a huge cleft in back of the towering hills and came to a circular aperture in it just big enough to admit his body.

A cry pealed from his lips, and he came to a pause.

"The entrance is frozen up!" he cried dejectedly.

"Lan' ob Goshen!"

"God help him!"

Frank's two faithful friends reeled back overwhelmed with despair.

One glance showed them that the aperture was one mass of ice so thick that were they armed with crow-bars and axes, it would have taken them a long time to cut their way through the dense wall.

They glanced at each other in mute consternation for a moment and a deep, profound silence ensued.

Barney presently recovered his speech:

"What, undher heaven, are we to do now?" he gasped.

"Kain't git in nohow, chile," muttered Pomp. "There is yet one chance," said the Esquimau, presently.

"What is it?" eagerly questioned Barney.

"Several shafts go down into the cave from up on top of the ice."

"You think we might climb down?"

"To do so you risk your life."

"Had I a dozen, I'd hazard all for Frank Reade!"

"Then ascend here. Only one must go at a time. We will wait."

Without another word, Barney began to climb up the slippery hill toward a point indicated by the Esquimau, where, he said, an opening was to be found, down which a descent could be made.

Up went the Irishman with amazing agility. Then, half way to the top he paused.

Ahead of him was a level, glassy stretch of a dozen yards which he would have to pass over, in order to reach the point he aimed at.

Summoning all his energies, he made the attempt to do the almost impossible feat, and succeeded in getting up a short distance.

Anxiously and suspensefully the others watched him from below.

Barney paused; then he slipped; then he slid back.

He made a desperate effort to save himself by flinging out his hands, but no hold could he gain upon the smooth surface.

A stifled cry pealed from his pale lips and he fell.

Down the steep and jagged side he came rolling and bounding, the two men below shouting fear as they saw his peril.

He came down like a cannon ball, slipping, rolling, bounding and striking, his clothing tearing, ugly lacerations bleeding all over him, and every protuberance in his way making a black-and-blue mark upon him whenever he struck it.

With a last roll and bound, he landed at the feet of the two men in a heap, pale, cut, and breathless, his eyes shut, not a word escaping him, and not a sign betraying that he lived!

A great cry of woe escaped Pomp as he bent over his old friend in a passion of grief, called upon him, rubbed him, carressed him and resorted to every artifice to discover whether he was yet alive or not.

But no reply came by word, look, or action.

Poor Barney! There was not much life left in him at that moment for the battering he got would have killed an ordinary man.

"He am dead! Oh, Lawd, he am dead," wailed Pomp, wildly.

"Let us carry his body back to the village," suggested the chief.

It was a long time before Pomp could master his grief sufficiently to lift the senseless man up by the shoulders, while the chief took him by the knees, and aided to carry him away.

When they arrived at the Igloo village, the Irishman's condition had not changed any, and they carried him into a vacant ice-hut, and laid him down on some skins on the floor.

Pomp wanted to remain with him, but he saw Barney's eyes staring wide open, and a thrill of intense dismay passed over him, for he now felt convinced that the luckless Irishman was dead.

Indeed, Barney looked as if he was beyond recall, and the Esquimau chief felt so certain of it that he led Pomp out.

"The spirit has departed," he said, solemnly.

"Let him rest in peace."

"Oh, Lawd! Oh, Lawd!" bellowed Pomp, tears streaming copiously from his eyes and a

drawn look of anguish delineated upon every lineament of his black face. "Poo' Barney! Wha' I segwine ter do wifout him? An' dar am poo' Massa Frank an' poo' Doctah Vaneyke, bofe done gone—all at de same time, an' me lef' behine. Oh, why kain't I die, too?"

He ran away, went on board the electric ice-boat and paying no heed to the solicitations of St. Malo and Beauvais he flung himself down upon the floor and gave way to a bitter flood of tears.

The Esquimau chief called one of his men into the hut where Barney laid motionless and staring upon the floor, and said to him:

"One of the white men fell and killed himself."

"Is he really dead?"

"He is a corpse, as you can see."

"That is unfortunate. What is to be done?"

"We must seal his body up in this hut."

"And you want me to do the work?"

"Yes, at once, after the manner of our burials."

"It shall be well done. Not a crack or crevice shall be left open, for I shall stop them up with snow, and then pour water upon them. It will freeze at once, and when a block of ice is set in the doorway the hut shall be so hermetically closed that his body will keep forever."

The two Esquimaux then left the hut. A few moments later the man set to work upon it, and so skillfully did he work that the interior of the hut was rendered air-tight.

This was the manner in which they disposed of their dead.

Having accomplished his work the man went away.

But unfortunately Barney was alive!

Moreover, he was perfectly conscious of all that transpired from the moment he opened his eyes, for beyond his cuts and bruises he had only been stunned and rendered half senseless by his fall.

Left with no power over his muscles and nerves, he could not move or speak, yet his brain was active enough to realize everything.

For a long time he remained with suspended animation like a man in a trance, but gradually the stunning effect wore away, and he slowly began to revive and regain his faculties.

The silent torture of mind he suffered upon hearing how he was being entombed alive was terrible, yet he had not the power to let them know that he was not dead, and had to helplessly submit.

Within an hour he was able to move.

Then he sat up, and although his tongue at first was thick and he only could gabble incoherently, this too wore away so that he was ultimately enabled to speak.

As soon as he could get upon his feet he did so, and made an effort to remove the ice block from over the door, but it was thick, heavy, and frozen as rigidly as iron, so that he could not move it.

He ached and pained all over from his cuts and bruises.

Vainly he tried every means to get out.

Then he noticed that the air in the hut was getting heavy and vitiated from being used up and no fresh air getting in.

A terrible fear stole over him, for he realized that he was fast smothering and would soon perish unless he got fresh air.

He shouted, beat at the walls frantically, and tried by every means to attract somebody's attention, but failed, utterly failed!

Soon he could hardly breathe, and his trembling limbs gave away from beneath him, and he sank chokingly to the floor.

"God help me!" he groaned. "Beggorra, I'm chokin' ter death!"

[END OF PART I.]

The continuation and conclusion of this story can be found in the FRANK READE LIBRARY No. 62 entitled, "FRANK READE, JR.'S ELECTRIC ICE BOAT; or, LOST IN THE LAND OF CRIMSON SNOW," by "Noname," Part II.

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